

# UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**ANALYSIS OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE  
OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN FREE  
STATE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**BY**

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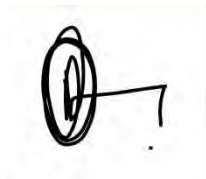
**SEPTEMBER 2023**

## DECLARATION

I, Fezile James Sonkwane, declare that this dissertation, which I submit to the University of Zululand for the completion of a Master's Degree in Public Administration, has not been previously submitted to any institution of higher learning for the purposes of obtaining a degree.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research, and I certify that I have to the best of my knowledge, complied with their requirements.

I have subjected this document to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking software and I consider it to be free of any form of plagiarism. This is my work, I have been given authority to carry out this study, and the sources that have been used in this study have been acknowledged.



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**Fezile James Sonkwane**

**202178710**

**Date: September 2023**

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late maternal grandmother Mmakidimotse Lydia Ntholeng and my late aunt Dinono Peggy Ntholeng. These women raised me and instilled meaningful values in me. May their gentle souls gain sweet repose!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for giving me the wisdom, tenacity and strength to complete this study. I further wish to convey my sincere gratitude to my parents, Mziafane Amos Sonkwane and Maditaba Maria Sonkwane for their support. To my daughter, Fezeka Sonkwane, I love you and I hope I've made you proud by pursuing this project.

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**UKUHLAZIYWA KWEZINQUBO ZOKUPHATHA ABASEBENZI KANYE  
NOKUSEBENZA KOHLELO LOKUXHUMANA LUKAHULUMENI NOLWAZI  
ESIFUNDAZWENI SASEFREYISTATA, ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA**

**IBHALWE NGU:  
FEZILE JAMES SONKWANE**

**ISIFINGQO**

Lolu cwaningo lugxile ekuphathweni kwabasebenzi kanye nokusebenza kohlelo lukahulumeni lwezokuxhumana nolwazi (GCIS), lwesifundazwe sase Freyistata. Okukhathazayo ehhovisi lesifundazwe kwaba ukuntenga kokulethwa kwezinsiza kweminye imikhakha kahulumeni nezakhamizi zizonke esifundazweni sase Freyistata. Njengoba kushiwo esahlukweni sokubuyekezwa kwezincwadi, ukuphathwa kwezisebenzi kuyingxenye ebalulekile yanoma iyiphi inhlangano noma ibhizinisi futhi ukuvelela kwaloko kulele ekuphathweni okuhlelekile kwezinsizakusebenza zabasebenzi, okufanele kuqinisekise ukuphathwa okubandakanyayo nokuphumelelayo ekuphathweni kwabantu enhlanganweni.

Lolu bekuwucwaningo lwekhwalithethuvu, okuklama kwalo kwasiza ukuhlangana kwababambiqhaza, okuholele empendulweni ejulile nenengqondo exhumene nezinjongo zocwaningo, lapho idatha (ulwazi) yaqoqwa ngezixoxo ezijulile nabahlanganyeli. Isheduli yenhlolekhono ibihlanganise imibuzo enesakhiwo esincane ngoba umcwaningi ubefuna ukuqoqa idatha (ulwazi) esezingeni eliphezulu, evulekile futhi ahlole imicabango yababambiqhaza. Ababambiqhaza balolu cwaningo bahlanganise umqondisi wesifundazwe, isekela lomqondisi, umsizi womqondisi, kanye nabobonke abaxhumanisi beGCIS esifundazweni saseFreyistata. Isamba sababambiqhaza abayi – 6 phakathi kwenani labantu abayi – 8 bafakiwe ocwaningweni. Ababambiqhaza basekele umongo oqondile ngokujwayelekile.

Idatha yalolu cwaningo ihlaziye kusetshenziswa ukuhlaziya kwe thematic esezingeni eliphezulu kanye nokutolika. Ukwethembeka kwedatha kufinyelelwe kuko ngokuhlolwa kwamalungu kanye nokuhlanganisa unxantathu. Okutholakele nokubalulekile kwembule ukuthi iGCIS yehhovisi laseFreyistata lidinga izinga labasebenzi abaneziqo zemfundo ephezulu ukuze imfundo yenze umsebenzi

wayo. Ngamanye amazwi: Laba bantu uma behlolwa abatholakale bewufanele umsebenzi abahlolwa wona. Okunye ukungabikho kwemali kunqinda ukukwenzeka kwezinye zezinto ezithile njengokuthenga amathuluzi okuhweba kanye nokukhokhelwa kwesikhathi sokusebenza esingeziwe.

Ukuqedwa kwezimali zomhlomulo nokugqoza kokukhushulwa kwamaholo kungezinye zezinto ezehlise isimilo kubasebenzi. Okunye okutholwe yilolu cwaningo ukuthi ababambiqhaza abaningi bahlobanise, bancikise ukuhlolwa kokusebenza nokukhokhwa kwamabhonasi. Ngaphandle kwale mihlomulo, ababambiqhaza abazimisele neze ukuba bahlolwe ukusebenza ngoba babona sengathi ukusebenza kwabo akunakwa futhi akuklonyeliswa. Ekugcineni lolu cwaningo luthole ukuthi ukulova emsebenzini kuleli hhovisi lesifundazwe saseFreyistata kuyoncipha ngokuba kube nendlela ehlelekile yabasebenzi yokuya ekhefini. Konke loku okuphawuliwe nokuqondile kuveze ukuthi loku kokubili (izinto ezihlelekile nezihlobene) zinethonya ekulethweni izinsizakuxhumana ezifundazweni saseFreyistata.

**Amagama Angukhiye:** ukuphathwa kwabasebenzi, ukuphathwa kokusebenza, ukuxhumana kukahulumeni, Ithiyori yezokusebenza kwabantu, ithiyori yokuphathwa kwesayensi, ukuphathwa kwamasu okusebenza kwabantu, ukuhlolwa kokusebenza.

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on personnel management practices and the performance of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in the Free State Province. The concern in the provincial office was weak communication service delivery to other sectors of government and citizens across the Free State Province. As cited in the literature review chapter, personnel management is a fundamental part of any organisation or entity and its prominence lies in the systematic management of human resources; which ought to guarantee inclusive and effective management of human capital in the organisation.

This was a qualitative study whose design facilitated interactive encounters with participants, which resulted in in-depth and meaningful feedback linked to the objectives of the study. The study followed a case study design, in which data was collected through in-depth interviews with participants. The interview schedule included semi-structured questions because the researcher wanted to collect qualitative, open-ended data and explore participants' thoughts. The participants for this study included the provincial director, deputy director, assistant director and all regional coordinators of the GCIS in the Free State Province. A total six (6) participants out of a total population of eight (8) were included in the study. The number of participants supported context specific generalisation.

Data for this study was analysed utilising a qualitative thematic analysis and interpretation. Trustworthiness of the data was achieved through member checks and triangulation. The key findings revealed that the GCIS Free State office needed a calibre of personnel with academic qualifications in order to carry out its mandate. Qualified personnel referred to personnel who meet the minimum standards of the posts and possess the competency to master the duties associated with the posts. Another finding was that constraints brought forth by the limited budget affect the implementation of certain tasks such as procurement of tools of trade and payment of overtime.

The termination of cash bonuses and the slow salary increment were some factors that have affected morale amongst staff. Part of the key findings was that most participants associated performance assessments with the payment of performance bonuses. Without this financial incentive in place, the participants were not keen to

undergo performance assessments. Hence the participants felt that their performance was not valued and rewarded. Lastly, the findings revealed that absenteeism in the GCIS Free State provincial office is minimised through proper management of individual leave plans. All of these context specific observations illustrated that both systemic and human related factors influence the communication service delivery in the Free State Province.

**Keywords:** personnel management, performance management, government communication, human capital theory, scientific management theory, strategic human resource management, performance appraisal.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AENE	-	Adjusted Estimates of National Expenditure
CoE	-	Compensation of Employees
Comtask	-	Communication Task Team
CPSI	-	Centre for Public Service Innovation
DCE	-	Digital Citizen Engagement
DPSA	-	Department of Public Service and Administration
GCIS	-	Government Communication and Information System
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
KPA	-	Key Performance Area
MTSF	-	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDP	-	National Development Plan
NEMISA	-	National Electronic Media Institute
NSG	-	National School of Government
PA	-	Performance Appraisal
PAIA	-	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PALAMA	-	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
PDMS	-	Performance Management and Development System
PSC	-	Public Service Commission
SETA	-	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SHRM	-	Strategic Human Resources Management
SMS	-	Senior Management Services
WPTPSD	-	White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND AND STUDY ORIENTATION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study intends to assess personnel management practices towards the performance of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Free State Office in terms of providing services to government communications and citizens of the Free State Province. GCIS is a critical institution in South Africa that carries the responsibility of driving all government communication campaigns and must strive to ensure the effective and efficient use of information and communication technologies. It is further expected to provide an oversight role across all communication activities occurring in government departments and entities. Government communication is a systematic and planned activity that is aimed at ensuring effective interaction between government and the public. As communication is one of the critical functions of government, it remains important for a key institution such as the GCIS to exist and for its performance to be continuously assessed to ensure that it delivers on its mandate of leading government communication. Netshitenzhe (2003) posits that government communication is an activity that is as old as human social organisation – the challenge GCIS is confronted with is how can they improve channels they have used historically while accommodating new ones brought forth by the new changing technology.

This view is further postulated by contemporary scholars such as Mmutle (2018) who contend that, communication and governance are as old as the civilisation of humankind across the African continent. The origin of these concepts can be traced as far back as the era of chieftaincies and monarchs which determined how communities were governed. Through making use of formal and informal means of communication, communities were directed by the rule of law of a specific kingdom to which they belonged, as such; intentional communication played a crucial role in constructing those communities. Similarly, we live in an era where communication between government and citizens is important to build trust between these two parties and for establishing a healthy relationship characterised by attributes of openness and transparency. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

has mandated the government to keep all citizens abreast of developments occurring in government, by regularly informing them about the services available for the amelioration of their lives, and further to continuously report back on advancements made in implementing government policies. According to South Africa's Constitution, the "public administration must be accountable" and "transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information" (The Constitution of South Africa, 1996: 111).

There are different definitions of „communication“, basically, it is understood as the passing of messages from the sender through a medium to the recipient. Effective communication, however, as defined by Rasila and Mudau (2014), is imperative for development. According to Chambers (2010), effective communication is also described as the communication characterised by community participation wherein community members are empowered with information and are part of the identification of their needs; challenges, intervention plans, implementation thereof, evaluation and monitoring in an environment conducive for them to take issues of their own development into their own hands by becoming active participants and owners of the whole process.

As a central communication service, the GCIS should be empowered with the authority to carry out its work and it should be placed in the highest office of government i.e. The Presidency. Furthermore, the GCIS as a mouthpiece of government should be privy to the government's decision-making processes, including the Executive, for it to communicate with authority and credence. Taking into consideration the importance of GCIS in government and the public as discussed above, there is a need for this study to analyse personnel management towards the performance of GCIS particularly in ensuring effective and efficient provision of communication services.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

From the inception of her democracy in 1994, South Africa's democratically-elected government has actively sought to deliver on its mandate of constructing a new nation wherein the citizenry's basic needs are catered for equally and fairly, human dignity is restored and all South Africans could have a sense of belonging. Under this new dispensation, the government has to constantly communicate its plans,

programmes and service delivery achievements in order to maintain a positive rapport with all citizens (Masuku and Jili, 2019). As part of transitioning from a culture of state secrecy which characterised the apartheid government, the new democratic government put in place measures to increase access to services, build strong institutions and broaden opportunities for all people to access economic opportunities. This requires planning and coordination – but especially communication – regarding with whom the government has to consult and to whom the government has to listen, and furthermore involves considering the needs and interests of the public and receiving feedback as part of this developmental process (Government Communication Policy 2018: 7).

The Government Communication and Information System was officially launched in May 1998. It was established in terms of Section 7 (subsections 2 and 3) of the Public Service Act, 1994 as amended. GCIS was established in order to provide professional communication services; set and influence adherence to standards for an effective government communication system, drive coherent government messaging, and proactively communicate with the public about government policies, plans, programmes and achievements (Government Communication and Information System 2020). According to Comtask (1996: 58), “In 1998, the South African Communication Service was dissolved and the GCIS established by Cabinet, largely on the basis of recommendations contained in the report of the Task Group on Government Communications”.

Improving government and business communication has recently become one of the most important tasks for government agencies ever (Sanina, Balashovb, Rubtcovac and Satinskyd, 2017: 251). The researcher is of the view that Communication should be considered as one of the essential services within government – to ensure that information is widely and publicly accessible to citizens, to engage the citizenry about critical issues and to empower them to participate in influencing government policies as well as in taking up opportunities that affect their lives. Effective communication can also contribute positively to government endeavours – leading to good governance, improved internal staff and external citizen/stakeholder morale, and contributing towards meeting government’s aims and objectives. It further builds public trust and confidence in the integrity of government and can be used to challenge any negative perceptions that might exist in the public space.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

Neuman (2011:85) defines a theoretical framework as a very general theoretical system with assumptions, concepts, and specific social theories. A theory is very important in providing a framework for the whole study, since it can assist the researcher in establishing what should be investigated. Theories also assist researchers to gain insight and are essential hence they predict how human beings are likely to conduct themselves when they encounter particular environments and information. Two theoretical systems were used in this study, namely; Human Capital Theory and the Scientific Management Theory (Taylorism).

#### **1.3.1 Human Capital Theory**

This study is underpinned by Human Capital Theory. This theory focuses on the competitive advantage that organisations have when they choose to invest in human capital. According to this theory, organisations also stand to gain some sustainability in a challenging business world when investing in human capital. Thus, GCIS needs to invest in its human capital to promote performance among the staff and to ensure quality provision of service delivery.

Wuttaphan (2017) avers that human resource practitioners would benefit greatly in using the workforce as an indispensable asset within the hierarchy of the organisation by investing in human capital to pull through in the competitive business world. Each organisation must modify the human capital concept in various ways according to the organisation's culture for it to gain the real value of the human capital theory.

This study relates to this theory in the sense that, for GCIS to be able to perform at its peak level, they need to manage their personnel by ensuring that they employ competent staff that will be able to deliver accordingly. Human Capital can ameliorate an organisation's performance and elucidate the significance of labour maximization and how a firm can accumulate employees' knowledge, expertise, and capacity by investing in people through training in order to enhance their ability to perform effectively.

### **1.3.2 Scientific Management Theory (Taylorism)**

According to Olum (2004) the theory of scientific management was pioneered by Fredrick Winslow Taylor toward the end of the nineteenth century. It describes how the application of the scientific method to the management of workers could greatly improve performance and productivity. Scientific management methods called for optimizing the way that tasks were performed and simplifying the jobs enough so that workers could be trained to perform their specialized sequence of motions in the one "best" way. Scientific Management Theory scrutinizes and incorporates workflows. It is mainly concerned with improving business efficiency, particularly workforce productivity. The Scientific Management Theory leads to productivity increment, meaning less workforce or trading hours are needed to produce similar results or work output. However, the relationship between the employer and employees becomes quarrelsome on whether the financial benefits will benefit owners in terms of increased profits or employees in terms of increased salaries. Organisations utilising the Scientific Management Theory are able to employ lower-skill workers, increasing labourers and thus lowering salaries and job security (Mitcham, 2005).

Many economists hold the view, however, that productivity increase benefits the economy in the long term and are pivotal in improving the livelihoods of consumers in general. This theory relates to this study in such that in GCIS it is the managers and administrators that have been trained, whose responsibility is to ensure that they perform their duties accordingly and that they serve other government departments with high care. They have a separate scope of practice, which means that workload is shared amongst the employees. When workload is shared amongst these employees that means that each can individually perform at their level best.

### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The GCIS is tasked to interact with South African citizens on issues that affect their livelihoods, including protecting citizens from threats resulting from information held by the state or other individuals. According to Ramodibe (2014), the GCIS is a state organ that enables the government to communicate directly with the public and by so doing, allows greater citizen participation and brings the government closer to the citizens. Providing accurate information is critical and it is the responsibility of GCIS

to perform such a duty. According to GCIS accurate information is possible when communicators and administrators can collect and improve information and communication of information at all levels (2019).

Personnel play a key role in performing duties within an organization. Each personnel member is empowered to bring about change and help the organization achieve its goals (Simon & Canacari, 2012). Nurakynova (2018) is of the view that staff talent determines the status and worth of any organization. According to Vosloban (2012); Nekoranec & Nagyová, (2014) personnel is the most important resource of any organization. Therefore, engaging adequate personnel with adequate capacity stands to benefit the organization. However, the area of inadequate personnel in literature is scant and GCIS is faced with this challenge. Hence, this study looks at the staff management at GCIS Free State Provincial Office and how this affects the performance of this organ of state in terms of its constitutional mandate.

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIMS**

The main aim of the study is to analyse personnel management towards the performance of GCIS at the Free State Provincial Office in Mangaung, South Africa where the organisation is managed.

### **1.5.1 Research Objectives:**

In order to realize the aim mentioned above, the following research objectives are critical, to:

- Investigate how personnel is managed in GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing and reporting government events, policies and programmes
- Qualitatively determine the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State
- Explore the extent to which personnel management affects the performance of GCIS Free State
- Suggest and recommend possible solutions to address personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**1.6.1** How is the management of personnel of GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing and reporting government events, policies and programmes?

**1.6.2** What are the challenges regarding personnel management of GCIS Free State?

**1.6.3** To what extent does personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State?

**1.6.4** What are the possible solutions that can be offered to curb personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State?

## **1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The researcher's rationale for the study is informed by the researcher's profession and current occupation as a government communicator within the Free State Provincial Government, particularly as the Assistant Director responsible for Internal Communication and Speech Writing at the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation. Additionally, the researcher has previously assumed the role of Acting Deputy Director for Communication and is well exposed to the government communication environment within the province. Since the researcher occupied his current occupation in 2015, a number of observations have been made including the fact that communication in government is mainly driven by departments and the GCIS is seldom actively involved in providing strategic leadership in planning, implementing and reporting on government events, policies and programmes. In this regard, the legislative mandate of GCIS is questioned and its human resource capacity warrants serious scrutiny.

It is the researcher's firm conviction that the GCIS must assume a leading role in coordinating the government communication system to ensure that citizens are informed and have access to government policies, plans and programmes. The GCIS must further play a fundamental role in building a nation that is well abreast

and involved in the business of government and can be the lifeblood of our country's democracy. South Africa has been plagued with destructive civic protests associated with a lack of service delivery and deteriorating (local) government functions (Machiri & Pade-Khene, 2020; Mpehle, 2012). Service delivery protests in South Africa reached their peak in 2010/2011 and during this period, Ntetha and Mostert (2011) conducted a study into the "availability and utilisation of information and communication technologies for service delivery". Govender (2016) indicates that the South African government has faced an increased number of service delivery protests throughout the country for over a decade. These challenges do not seem to be subsiding; instead, they are intensified with every government election (Govender, 2016).

One of their major findings is that government GCIS has adequate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and personnel use these, however, they discovered that these tools are not used to improve service delivery. In addition, Nengwekhulu (2009) indicates that there is a shortage of skills in government. Digital Citizen Engagement (DCE) has globally been touted as a game changer in civic protests as it has the potential to facilitate a two-way communication and evidence-based engagement between government and citizens. In South Africa, citizen and government engagement happens mostly at a local level, although GCIS oversees government communication at all levels. However, annual reports of GCIS do not view the adequacy of personnel as a key reporting area. In the last three years, nothing has been reported in the Annual Performance Plans on the adequacy of personnel to aid GCIS in delivering on its constitutional mandate.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Attard (2018) posits that the methodology section in a research study is a crucial part of the research and ultimately of the thesis/dissertation itself. In this section, the researcher outlined how the data was collected and how it was analysed and interpreted. The design and methods should be described in sufficient detail to allow an assessor to estimate the workload and if the timeline/schedule is realistic.

Qualitative and quantitative research are the two main schools of research methods, and even though they are usually utilised in tandem, the advantages and disadvantages of each are fiercely argued. Specifically, in the social sciences, the

merits of both qualitative and quantitative research are debated over, with rigorous views held on both sides of the debate. There is a general consensus, however, that there are some stages of research where one or the other is clearly more functional than the other and so few scholars completely disregard either. Both qualitative and quantitative research are equally important in their respective fields. However, qualitative research is more useful in social sciences as it is concerned with understanding perceptions and phenomena.

This study is a qualitative research hence non-numerical data was collected and analysed. This was done in order to comprehend concepts and experiences as well as gather an in-depth insight into the research problem at hand. The empirical research includes a literature study which primarily includes a critical review of the GCIS and its strategic relationship with other government departments and agencies. Literature available in the public domain was used. Other literature for this research includes GCIS annual reports, annual performance plans, Government Communicator's Handbook and academic literature on government communication.

## **1.9 RESEARCH STUDY AREA**

The study was conducted at the Provincial Office of GCIS located in Mangaung, Free State Province, South Africa. This is where all managers are situated and where most of the staff establishment is located. Regional Coordinators are located in all five districts across the province. The GCIS mainly provides professional services, influences adherence to standards for an effective government communication system and further drives coherent government messaging in the province. All these activities are led from its provincial office.



**Figure 1.1:** Map of Free State Province ([www.places.co.za](http://www.places.co.za))

## 1.10 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This research study is divided into five chapters, that is, the background and orientation of the study, the Literature review, research methodology, Data Presentation, analysis and Interpretation and Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

### **Chapter One: [Background and Orientation of the Study]**

This chapter provides a broad overview of the study, among other aspects it pays special attention to the statement of the problem, objectives, research question, motivation of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key concepts.

### **Chapter Two: [Literature Review]**

This chapter provides an overview of literature of the study in connection with objectives of the study.

### **Chapter Three: [Research Methodology]**

This chapter comprises of research methodology of the study.

### **Chapter Four: [Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation]**

This chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

## **Chapter Five: [Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations]**

This Chapter presents findings according to the objectives of the study. After careful consideration of the findings, appropriate conclusions are drawn and pertinent recommendations are made.

### **1.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the background and problem statement to be investigated and addressed. The research problem questions, objectives, and aim of the study were also detailed in this chapter. The next chapter reviews the literature review on performance management and outlines the challenges thereof.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explained in detail the background of the study, this chapter focuses on the literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning the current study. The literature in this chapter mainly addresses concepts such as Personnel Management, Strategic Human Resource Management, Performance Appraisal, Senior Management Services as well as Performance Management and Development System whereas the last part of this chapter examines the theoretical framework of the study. A literature review includes the search for related reading material, assessing and summarising it in order to make a case for the study in question. Published material such as accredited academic journal articles, dissertations, textbooks, official state reports and trusted internet sources have been used as part of the literature for this study for the purpose of putting research into perspective and enhancing research. According to Ndebele (2021), the utilisation of such documents can assist in identifying the problem that needs to be researched and the literature review as well as the theoretical framework of the study.

Jili (2012) posits that a literature review ought to describe, compare, contrast, and evaluate the major theories, arguments, themes, methodologies, approaches, and controversies in the scholarly literature on a subject, and connect them with the concerns of the proposed piece of research. In this chapter, the researcher collected all the research related to the topic and compared it to determine whether the research was ever conducted on this specific title of the study. Through this review process, the researcher was aware of the gap that exists on the researcher's topic hence various scholars that have previously conducted research related to this topic such as Mahomed (2004), Mukhudwana (2014), Ndaba (2014), Singh (2014), Shabangu (2017) and Van der Merwe (2017) among others, focused on regional and provincial spheres of government communication outside the Free State Province and literature on government communication within the Free State Province is scarce, particularly on GCIS as a central communication hub for government.

## **2.2 PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS**

Public administration focuses on the structure and operation of bureaucracies and organizations, with detailed attention being paid to key aspects such as budgeting, personnel, and both formal and informal procedures of controls (Singh, 2014). Undoubtedly, Personnel Management within government institutions is as important as in any other sector or industry. Belaz, Rozsa and Metzger (2021) are of the view that Personnel Management is a fundamental part of any organisation or entity and that its prominence lies in the systematic management of human resources, which ought to guarantee inclusive and effective management of human capital in the organisation. This view is concurred by Ezeaku (2019) who states that Personnel Management is a constant process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of employees so that the mission and vision of the organisation are more effectively achieved, while simultaneously benefitting employees in terms of professional growth and career guidance.

According to Pavenkov and Rubtcova (2021), personnel management is a critical aspect of management because employees are the leading productive and creative force, besides the fact that most of the time greater attention is given to issues of mechanisation and automation of production as well as other technological aspects in an organisation or institution. Okonkwo (2021) asserts that out of all resources within a professional setting, the most important is personnel because it is the duty of personnel to programme resources in order to achieve a goal or a mission, in other words, it is the personnel that activate and engage others into operation. Human beings are locomotives who derive capital, organise and use other resources, construct social and political organisation and lead national development. Pavenkov and Rubtcova (2021) further aver that the important place within personnel management of an organisation is influenced by the fact that any organisation or institution often serves not only as a subject of economic activity but similarly as a social system, the attributes of which are determined by the social values of employees and their needs. This is evidenced in state departments and organisations as well as in the private sector, and therefore the challenges associated with the growth or development of human capital are vital in the management. There are nine phases of personnel management, which include a number of measures according to Segeda, Obolentseva and Aleksandrova (2021):

- i. **Planning of human resources** – this process entails a number of successive actions, during which we analyse, project and calculate human resources and identify the needs for new staff. In addition, a program of action is drafted;
- ii. **Recruitment** – recruit (employ) staff; craft a personnel reserve of potential candidates for all vacancies. Thereafter there is a constant modernization of the process of establishing a personnel reserve in line with the requirements of the time;
- iii. **Selection of personnel** – the quest for an employee who is capable of achieving the planned results. This phase of personnel management can be divided into a number of parts: the evaluation of job seekers and the selection of the best of the candidates that were identified during the recruitment process. The main assessment criteria include a certain set of qualifications and professional expertise; personal and educational attributes; work experience; and compatibility with the environment. The main methods of selection include a number of tests and interviews, assessment of abilities and personal qualities;
- iv. **Development of the remuneration system** – at this phase, remuneration packages and benefits are calculated in order to attract and retain personnel. A remuneration package is a monetary reward for the performance of tasks and work executed. It is a critical argument for most workers;
- v. **Personnel adaptation** – the phase of adaptation of newly-employed staff includes actions aimed at introducing new staff to the course of the production life of the organisation or institution and all its branches/units and services. Novice employees are inducted on what is expected of them, and what type of work in the organisation or institution deserves to be rewarded. The main purpose of adaptation – to bring the knowledge, skills and abilities of the employee's existing experience and values in line with the values and traditions of the organisation or institution;
- vi. **Personnel training** – develop programs to educate work skills for effective performance of future work. Personnel undergo retraining and training typically in the following cases:

- When a person comes to work in the organisation or institution;
  - If the staff member transfers to a new role or the scope of authority of the staff member changes;
  - If the staff member performs dismally the duties assigned to them,
  - If the staff member is found to have inadequacies;
  - When there is a change of tools of trade or technological processes;
  - If new methods and developments are introduced;
- vii. Personnel evaluation** – the phase of analysis of labour activity, which includes the development of appraisal methods and bringing them to staff. Typically, the appraisal system includes modern and classical tools. This aspect of working with staff is considered the most time-consuming. It requires the management of the organization or institution to be highly qualified, hence it is necessary not only to identify who the weak link is but also to understand why the employee displays poor results;
- viii. Relocation of employees** – a phase related to the increase, decrease, relocation, or dismissal of personnel;
- ix. Career management** – planning, organization, motivation and control of career growth of personnel is performed in line with the goals, needs, and capabilities of the organisation or institution (Segeda, Obolentseva and Aleksandrova, 2021).

The above nine phases of personnel management show that personnel management is an all-inclusive impact on all personnel in the organisation, which can be guaranteed only in the presence of such a model of personnel management, which will take into consideration the aforementioned phases of personnel management with the apposite impact. The fundamental undertaking of personnel management in any organisation or institution involves ensuring the suitable number of personnel to meet the set objectives and mission of the organisation or institution, in other words, staff members should possess the requisite level of education and qualifications to execute their respective mandates in the organisation or institution.

Personnel management should furthermore take into account the facet of job variability when selecting and bringing into line the personal attributes of staff members with the overall strategic objectives of the organisation or institution. The performance and success of the organisation or institution has its genesis in personnel management. Shonubi (2020) postulates that numerous organisations are now beginning to view the significance of investing in their staff through training. Conversely, training shouldn't be a one-off exception but a systematic necessity to assist in filling skills gaps and retaining the organisation moving forward successfully.

### **2.2.1 Performance Management System**

Part of personnel management includes performance Management, which is the process through which a supervisor and an employee set performance goals that should be achieved in a given period. Performance Management is regarded as a process which significantly affects organizational success through having supervisors and employees work together to set expectations, review results and reward performance (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2011). According to Liebenberg and van der Merwe (2004:262-263), Performance Management is a process during which team leaders plan, organise, lead and control the performance of team members. Performance Management can also be described as a way of capacitating employees in the workplace through accompaniment by a mentor (Mosoge & Pilane, 2014:06). According to Mucha (2011) performance Management in the public sector is regarded as an ongoing, organized system designed to enhance results through evidence-based decision making, continuous organizational learning, and a focus on accountability for performance.

Mondy (2010) holds the view that Performance Management is a goal-oriented process which is moving towards ensuring that processes within the organization are put in place to increase the effectiveness of employees and organisations. In the literature, the term Performance Management tends to be used to refer to a system through which organizations set objectives, determine performance standards, assign and assess work, offer performance feedback, determine training and development needs, and distribute rewards (Briscoe & Claus, 2008). Based on these views, Performance Management can be described as a planned, collaborative exercise during the course of which all staff, teams, groups, and individuals set out

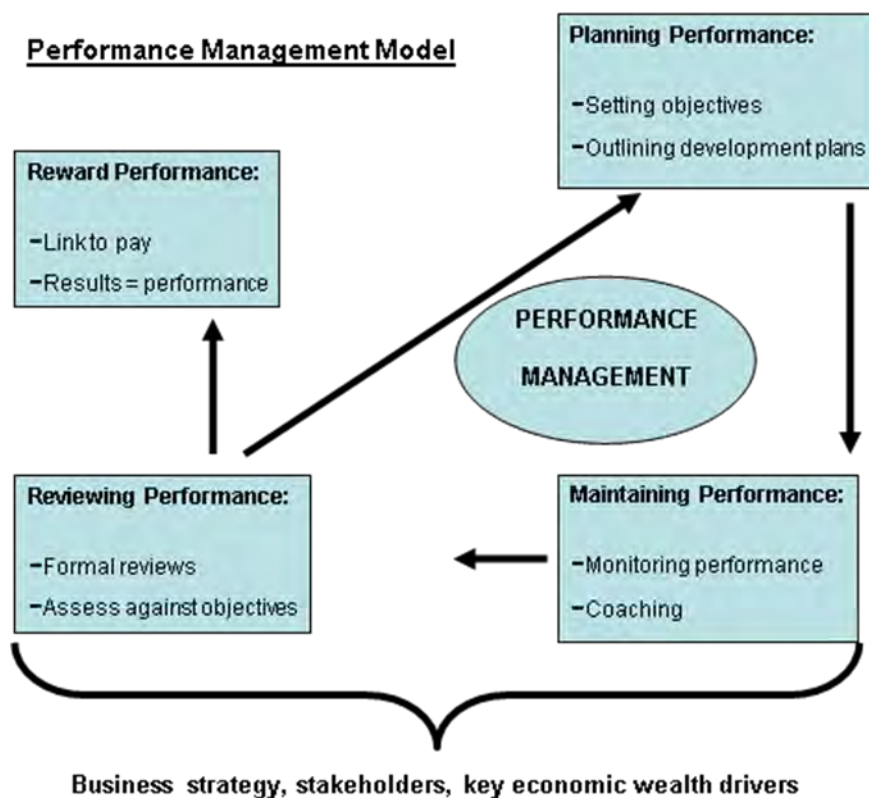
to realise both individual and organisational objectives. Understanding the nature of Performance Management is important to an organization because it assists the organization to realise the need to ensure that the process is on-going and developmental. The process involves supervisors and employees setting performance goals, determining performance standards, assessing work, and providing and receiving regular feedback. Understanding the process also assists the organization in comprehending that the process requires careful planning and the full commitment of all members of the organization to realise both individual and organisational objectives.

### **2.2.1.1 Performance Management Process**

Performance Management is a combination of interconnected activities and processes that are taken wholly for achieving and enhancing organizational objectives. Moreover, Performance Management is an organisational practice rather than an individual practice (Armstrong, 2009). Supervisors and junior managers have a critical role to play in the Performance Management process, which contributes greatly towards organizational effectiveness. Performance Management is, therefore, an on-going communication process between subordinates and their supervisors aimed to unleash workers' capabilities and improve organizational effectiveness. Thusi, Jili, Adetiba, Mlambo and Mkhize (2022:42-43) state that, "Because line managers are directly responsible for the implementation of performance management practices in their respective departments, top management can play an important role in this regard by including performance management in their job descriptions and making them aware that this is an integral part of their position. Managers, being the primary role players in the institution, must be thoroughly taught and informed in order to execute a perfect PMS.

This can only be accomplished by evaluating the value of training received via the development of training and evaluation methodologies. The inability of the manager to recognize their position in performance management would have a negative influence on staff performance since it is reliant on employee performance". Kaupa and Atiku (2020) posit that the organizational performance of the management system assists senior management in achieving strategic corporate objectives and targets. It provides valid and useful data for making strategic decisions regarding

employees. It includes information on workers' performance, and organizational and supervisor's expectations. Despite the benefits arising from the practice of a well-designed performance management system, the public sector still confronts challenges when it comes to its realization. This supposition is corroborated by Makamu (2016) who avows that public sector officials have experienced ineffectual performance management. This has been found to have a negative effect on their levels of work engagement and on employment relationships. Furthermore, this can have an adverse influence on their performance, and for this reason, it is critical to enforce effective performance through the practice of effective performance management. The figure below illustrates the Performance Management process:



**Figure 2.1: Performance Management Process (O'Callaghan, 2005:03)**

The implementation of an effective performance management model begins with setting objectives and outlining individual development plans for each employee. These are elaborated in the performance agreements entered into by both the employee and the supervisor. Performance of each employee is then moderated

through monitoring and coaching on an on-going basis. Assessments are conducted periodically in order to review and assess objectives as set out at the beginning of the assessment period. This is done through formal reviews wherein the supervisor in consultation with the employee review progress made. Kotola (2016) posits that performance management is a human resource management function that builds the type of workplace in which employees are empowered to fulfil their tasks as well as they possibly can. As noted by Nxumalo, Goudge, Gilson and Eyles (2018), the main objective of performance management is to provide employees with the progress of their work performance and highlight their weaknesses and strengths. Nxumalo et al. (2018) go further to argue that this process will assist the leadership of the organisation to identify employees who qualify for salary increments and promotions, identify training and development needs, allocate employees based on their strengths and provide possible reasons for any disciplinary actions.

### ***2.2.1.2 Influence of Work Engagement and Relationships on Performance Management***

Work engagement is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption with regard to the job description. Work engagement is an essential aspect of organisational behaviour. One reason that work engagement is such an on-going process is that it is essentially a reliable indicator of employee, team and organisational outcomes (Bakker and Albrecht, 2018). Performance management is one of the functions that fall under the human resource management scope. Performance management can be utilised proactively to enhance work engagement to accomplish the desired goals. Unless and until employees in the public sector are content with the performance management process, and they are truly engaged in their work, service in the public sector will not improve satisfactorily. For any organisation to expand and thrive, an assessment of employment relationships is important because of the influence that employee performance has on the organisation's productivity. A solid relationship between supervisors and employees is critical in ensuring that organisational goals are attained (Georgalis, Samaratunge, & Kimberley, 2015).

The following are some of the management components of employment relationships:

- *Trust*

Rahman and Taniya (2017) contend that trust is considered to be one of the most important variables influencing organisational performance. Trust can develop, weaken or even become apparent because of a relationship. Research has shown that many South African supervisors do not value, respect or foster trust and do not display compliance, fairness and good faith in their interactions with subordinates (Ehlers, 2017).

- *Fairness*

According to Park and Sturman (2016), employees with higher levels of satisfaction with their supervisor, and those with higher levels of job performance retain relatively positive perceptions of fairness.

- *Compliance*

Xesha, Iwu, Slabbert and Nduna (2014) avow that to form solid relationships in an organisation, supervisors must ensure that they comply with labour laws or face penalties and the end of the relationship they have with the employees. It should also be considered that employment contracts can be utilised simply to empower employers to outline an employee's duties and to facilitate how the employee discharges them if realistic support is provided to an employee (Ehlers, 2017).

### **2.2.1.3 Stakeholders involved in Performance Management System.**

Various stakeholders are involved in the performance management system in the public sector. They include institutions such as the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Public Service Commission (PSC), National School of Government (NSG), Trade Unions, Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) as well as employees.

*i. Department of Public Service and Administration*

Human Resources in the South African public sector is regulated by directives and policies from the DPSA. The mandate of the DPSA is to develop regulations and policies that can guide all actors involved in human resource matters in the public sector. Moreover, the DPSA has to ensure that the policies that they develop receive support from trade unions in order for them to be successfully implemented. The DPSA also provides support to other government departments in developing the capacity to implement policies. Organisational organograms and establishments of departments as well as other organisational and governance arrangements in the public service fall within the DPSA's scope.

*ii. Public Service Commission*

The Public Service Commission is a Chapter 10 institution that seeks to promote principles and values that are enshrined in section 195 of the Constitution. It was formed in terms of section 196 of the Constitution to guarantee efficient and effective performance in the South African civil service. Part of the constitutional mandate of the commission is to evaluate, investigate and monitor human resource practices in the public sector. The commission publishes its findings in the form of public reports annually.

*iii. National School of Government*

The NSG was established in 2013 to replace the erstwhile Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA). The mandate of the NSG is to advocate for a professional, responsive, and capable civil service that seeks to realise the policies and values of a Developmental State. The NSG also seeks to facilitate training provision for all officials in the public sector. It is classified as a department in terms of the Public Service Act.

*iv. Trade unions*

The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) defines a union as an association of workers whose main objective is to facilitate the relations between workers and employers including organisations that represent employers. Unions have to ensure that the management of an institution recognises their shop stewards hence shop

stewards play a key role in the workplace in all labour matters that affect their members. It must also be highlighted that civil service employment is highly unionised with a majority of its employees affiliated to one union or the other.

v. *Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI)*

The CPSI is a government entity in terms of the Public Service Amendment Act, Act 30 of 2007. It is mandated by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration to fulfil the mandate in relation to innovation for improved service delivery in the civil service. Its nature of operation is to contribute towards the improvement, effectiveness and efficiency of the civil service.

### **2.3 STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

“Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to practices and policies that are required so that the management operations related to personal questions can be done” (Abdiyev and Alimardonov, 2022; 495). Conversely, the domain of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) commenced with several conceptual papers aligning strategy and human resource management practices (Lee, 2021). The purpose of human resource management in organizations and institutions has drastically shifted from being conformist to being more creative and ingenious in effecting adventurous human resource practices such as competency-based recruitment, innovation compensation, goal-oriented performance management, and human capital development (Fenech, 2022).

The way organisations, institutions or companies react to changes in their respective sectors determines the priorities and concerns in the field of strategy. Strategy includes drafting long-term objectives to meet environmental challenges and applying actions through the allocation of corporate resources to realise a sustained competitive advantage. Competitive strategy needs to be established in order to accomplish a vertical fit between external environmental opportunities and threats that an organisation or institution confronts concerning its internal resources and management beliefs. Resolutions on goals and policies can be made at three spheres; namely, the corporate level, business unit level, and functional level. Lee (2021) further argues that an organisation’s senior management is mandated with determining the corporate strategy, while each business leader (supervisors) and

their respective teams (officials) outline the plan or stratagem in which they intend to compete in their sector.

Becker and Huselid (2006) cited in AL-khrabsheh, AL-Bazaiah, AL-khrabsheh, & Alheet, (2022) state that managing human resources must align with the strategic objectives, mission, and culture inherent to an organisation. Personnel may experience frustration if the institutional environment and human resource management practices do not align well (due to extensive bureaucracy or staff shortage). Human Resource Management is a management activity that is concerned with staffing, motivation, and regulating the conduct of employees within the organisational context. The organisation or institution creates managerial frameworks to unearth the optimal utilisation of human abilities to accomplish business objectives in the environment determined by the organisational or institutional culture, which is the core identity of the organisation (Aswathapa, 2016).

Many organisations and institutions strive to attract employees who are highly skilled and talented and have great potential. This calibre of employees can be sourced either from the labour market or from within the existing staff complement. Coculova and Tomcikova (2021) aver that most managers are of the considered view that an organisation or institution can really be prosperous when teamed up with a skilled and talented workforce that also has great potential. They reckon that globalisation as well as the high level of business competition in modern labour market underscores the demand for talent. To develop human resource talent, an organisation or institution should invest in the education and training of its staff. Ogbu and Osanaiye (2017) have described the concept of training as a process that empowers employees with skills, information and comprehension of the organisation and its strategic objectives. Training affords the workforce to be more knowledgeable about how to carry out their respective tasks within the organisational establishment while simultaneously acquiring new skills to assist them to successfully meet organisational goals effectively. Shonubi (2020) concedes that the training of the workforce eradicates obsolescence in expertise, digitisation, methods, products, business management, etc. and the ultimate result of training programs is to generally realise the corporate goals of the organisation, which is profitability or service delivery.

## **2.4 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS**

A critical technique that is utilised for improving the expertise and talents of the workforce in organisations or institutions is referred to as Performance Appraisal. Seboko (2020) defines Performance Appraisal as a process that sets work standards and then monitors employees' actual job performance relative to those standards and provides them feedback to improve performance and eradicate any identified performance flaws. According to Gaur and Rajendra (2021; 4279), "Organizations have implemented performance appraisal to monitor and supervise relationships, growth, and development of individuals and organisations to increase overall productivity and job satisfaction". Performance Appraisal guidelines are often used by HR divisions to assess employees, enhance their performance, expand their competence and reward them for good performance. The performance of any organisation or institution is underpinned by the quality of its employees, therefore, retaining personnel, particularly those who are highly skilled and proficient, has become a key challenge for many managers.

Moreover, performance appraisals can be described as periodic assessments of employees' progress towards the achievement of set goals and objectives. Performance appraisals assist stakeholders (subordinates and supervisors) in Performance Management to know their progress towards the achievement of their set goals, which consequently assists in the realization of the goals of the organization. Performance appraisal may be defined as a formal and systematic process, by means of which the job-related strengths and weaknesses of employees are identified, observed, measured, recorded and developed (Swanepoel, Erasmus & Schenk, 2008).

Performance appraisal is a formal system of review and assessment of individual or team task performance (Foot & Hook, 2011). A broader perspective has been adopted by Molofo (2012), who argues that performance appraisal is a systematic and periodic process in which individual employee performance is measured, based on the predetermined goals and objectives of an organization or department. Performance appraisal is the personnel activity by which the organization determines the extent to which the employee is performing the job effectively (Abdullah & Mohamed, 2013).

Drawing from these definitions, one can say that performance appraisal is a formal system of examining and assessing how good employees progress towards achieving set objectives and expectations. Performance appraisal is about judging employees' performances against activities projected on a work plan with the intention of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual employees. Banda and Chibomba (2020) recommend that, in the context of the civil service, the state must prioritise the training of all public servants on Performance Appraisal and supervision. They recommend that the state must further ensure that the implementation of the Performance Appraisal programme is implemented on a sustainable basis in all government departments and entities. This recommendation is important in that, personnel are inherently in charge of running and leading organisations or institutions. Performance Appraisal is often executed by and for the people (supervisors, officials). Gaur and Rajendra (2021) aver that the evaluation technique for Performance Appraisal should be determined by the organisation or institution, and the supervisor's task should be to execute it by collecting relevant data from the officials and providing an outcome that is impartial and unbiased.

## **2.5 SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

The notion of Senior Management Services (SMS) was introduced in the South African public sector because of a demand for better service delivery which remains a core priority for government to bring stability and compliance. Ledwaba, Khoza and Bester (2021) state that the introduction of SMS in the South African civil service was adopted from the Canadian civil service where it was used in the application of important leadership profile competencies for civil service leadership. The establishment of SMS in 2001 was a direct response to the need for professionalising and transforming the senior management cadre of the South African civil service (Van Dijk and Labuschagne, 2016).

This change came as a result of the amendment to the Public Service Regulations in 2001. The Public Service Regulations, (2001) necessitate that the performance of all SMS members in government must be monitored through a performance agreement or contract, which corresponds with the strategic vision of the department in which they are appointed. Ledwaba et al. (2021) lament that it is expected of SMS members to display high ethical conduct hence their role is that of determining

direction, structure, systems, culture, and achievement of outcomes in state departments and entities. This view is further corroborated by De Wet and Van Der Waldt (2013) who argue that contemporary senior managers in government, leading the administration within developmental states, are propelled by their mere role and the justified expectations of citizens to display continual high levels of proficiency in relevant competencies.

## **2.6 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON COMMUNICATION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The aim of this section is to provide insight into how different policies conceptualise communication and its importance in the functioning and in leading government communications in South Africa.

### **2.6.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)**

The preamble of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that “section 32(1) (a) of the Constitution provides that everyone has the right of access to any information held by the State”. As the supreme law of the country, the constitution prescribes that the provision of correct and timely information is important for the citizens of the country. Furthermore, section 239 of the constitution describes “organs of state”, and Government Communications and Information System falls under the description of an organ of state as it is tasked in:

- (i)** Exercising a power or performing a function in terms of the Constitution or a provincial constitution; or
- (ii)** Exercising a public power or performing a public function in terms of any legislation, but does not include a court or a judicial officer.

Ramodibe (2014) points out that it is the mandate of GCIS given by the constitution that the government must keep in touch with the citizens by frequently updating them on the services available for the improvement of their lives, and further continuously giving them feedback on progress made by the government on implementing its policies. Government communication with citizens is therefore a constitutional mandate and GCIS is obligated to perform this mandate without fail.

### **2.6.2 The National Development Plan (NDP)**

The National Development Plan calls for an active citizenry to realise Vision 2030. The aim of the NDP is to eradicate poverty and minimize inequality in South Africa by 2030. The NDP realizes the important role that citizens can play to realize these goals and interaction between government and citizens is viewed as critical to promote this interaction. The NDP envisages that by 2030 every South African will enjoy the following (as part of a decent life):

A decent standard of living consists of the following core elements:

- Housing, water, electricity and sanitation
- Safe and reliable public transport
- Quality education and skills development
- Safety and security
- Quality health care
- Social protection
- Employment
- Recreation and leisure
- Clean environment
- Adequate nutrition

The government should therefore develop and implement initiatives that make the realization of a decent standard of living a reality. Such initiatives would include, for example, the National Imbizo Focus Week which promotes active engagements between South African citizens and government and encourages and promotes two-way communication and participation by all sectors of society in the government's key programmes (GCIS, 2017).

### **2.6.3 Promotion of Access to Information Act 2, of 2000**

The aim of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), Act 2 of 2000 is to operationalize "the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights; and to provide for matters connected therein". Effective communication of information that impacts the rights of citizens is

important. According to the World Health Organization (2017) government should protect citizens with regards to threats to their private lives.

#### **2.6.4 Government Communication in South Africa**

The government is propelled and bound to maintain constant and effective communication with all citizens. This assertion is validated by various pieces of legislation such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), and the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 02 of 2000) which all propel officials working as government communicators and necessitate high levels of transparency, accountability, openness, participatory democracy and direct communication with the citizenry. Government communication is driven by democratic principles of openness and participation and is guided by the basic principles of transparency, accountability consultation, courtesy, information, redress, value for money and service standards as espoused in the Batho Pele/People First code of ethics. Although the GCIS is “primarily responsible for providing strategic leadership in communication and coordinating a government communication system that ensures that the public is informed and have access to government programmes and policies that benefit them” (Corporate Strategy 2010/13: 02), it remains imperative to conduct an introspection on whether its performance has been effective in this regard and whether or not there is a need for re-alignment in order for it to meet the needs and expectations of the general public as an institution.

Section 195 (g) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 forms the basis of the formation of the GCIS, where it stipulates that in order to foster transparency the public should be provided with information that is timely, accurate and importantly, accessible. The mandate of South Africa’s government makes it necessary for its mode of communication to be stretched in order to enhance access to information that would empower the public to take up an active role in the country’s transformation and in making their lives better; that it should bring the realities of our emergent and thriving democracy to the attention of the international community; and promote the continental cooperation, including regional integration and implementation of people-centred development programmes.

According to the Government Communication Policy (2018), “Government’s communication strategy is drafted every five years and updated once a year”. Strategy determines the path and the actions that must be taken for the organisation to be able to reach its goals. A number of different strategies can be employed to achieve organisational goals. A Communication Policy must set out the rules, processes and procedures on how communication will function across government institutions and at the three spheres – national, provincial and local. Such a policy can then work as the basis for developing a communication strategy for the government. The South African government adopted the National Development Plan (NDP) as a long-term plan to alleviate poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country by the year 2030. For this plan to be successfully realised, ordinary citizens have to take an active role in development. To this end, the capacity of the state must be expanded; leadership and partnerships must also be promoted. The NDP (2012:37) notes that “there is growing distance between citizens and the government”. This needs to be minimised if South Africa is to achieve its developmental objectives. Government therefore needs to actively communicate and share information with citizens. The GCIS must develop a five-year medium-term plan that will inform and drive communication priorities linked with the electoral mandate and based on the government’s Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). It must also strive to realise a strategic alignment with the national government agenda to support communication of the seven priority areas of government:

- Economic transformation and job creation;
- Education, skills and health;
- Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services;
- Spatial integration, human settlements and local government;
- Social cohesion and safe communities;
- Building a capable, ethical and developmental State; and
- A better Africa and world (Ramaphosa 2019).

Notwithstanding the budgetary constraints that the GCIS currently faces, a change is needed in this regard to ensure that significant strides are made in implementing development communication henceforth, with firm plans to enhance this service in

future. Progress also has to be made in sustaining and strengthening a well-functioning government communication system. The GCIS must be at the centre of the government's interaction and communication with the press. Its interaction must sustain communication from the government to the public on matters and decisions that affect them. Communication of government messages must be enhanced through the placement of opinion pieces, media statements and daily government messaging in various print, broadcast and social media platforms covering different topics pertaining to key government programmes.

### **2.6.5 The Public Finance Management Act of 1999**

The main aim of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 (PFMA) is to regulate and manage the finances of government in provincial and national departments in order to ensure that the revenue, expenditure, and assets of government are managed efficiently and effectively (Republic of South Africa, 1999). Chapter 5 of the Act deals with financial management at the level of a department. The PFMA stipulates that employees are responsible for the effective and efficient use of resources, for avoiding wasteful, irregular and unauthorised expenditures, and for safeguarding assets that are within their areas of responsibility.

The PFMA is relevant to the study because the performance of employees should be judged by its content. It stipulates that employees are expected to ensure that they perform activities that are in line with the operational plan of their units, to prevent units from committing to programmes that are not budgeted for. As part of the EPMDS, employees should be trained on the provisions of this Act, which training does not currently occur in the majority of units in municipalities.

### **2.6.6 The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WTPSD) of 1998**

The major objective of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WTPSD) of 1998 is to transform the public sector so that it serves the communities which were previously disadvantaged by the former White regime (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998). The WTPSD endeavours to present a new strategy to improve the delivery of public services that is based on systems,

procedures, and the attitudes of public sector officials, which should involve putting people first. It demands that public servants perform their functions in accordance with eight principles, namely consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. The eight principles are referred to as the Batho Pele principles. The Performance Management system must be based on and should give effect to the Batho Pele principles of improved service delivery. WPTPSD is related to the study because it aims to develop human resources who can provide efficient and effective service to the public. The document is mainly about improved performance.

### **2.6.7 The White Paper on Human Resource Management of 1997**

Chapter 5 of the White Paper on Human Resource Management of 1997 (WPHRM) discusses Performance Management in the public sector. The White Paper on Human Resource Management (WPHRM) encourages government departments to establish Performance Management systems. It encourages supervisors and employees to plan for Performance Management. It encourages stakeholders in Performance Management to clearly stipulate how performance will be monitored and how performance will be scrutinized for the purposes of rewards, training, and sanctions (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997). This implies that if one employee has not achieved the agreed-upon objectives the organization suffers. Hence the significance of managing the performance of employees by assigning managers or supervisors to them. The WPHRM is based on the following five principles: results orientation, training and development, rewarding good performance, managing poor performance, and openness (which includes fairness and objectivity).

## **2.7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (PDMS)**

As previously stated in 2.2.1 (Stakeholders involved in Performance Management System), Human Resources in the South African public sector is regulated by directives and policies from the DPSA. To this end, a framework known as the PDMS is issued to all government departments and entities in order to assess the performance of all officials during and at the end of each financial cycle against a performance agreement that exists between the official and the supervisor. A

financial cycle typically begins at the beginning of April and ends at the end of March of the following year. When conducting annual performance assessments, fifteen (15) Key Performance Areas (KPA's) are utilised to assess job competencies and identify developmental areas for each employee, using a 5-point scale, where 1 and 2 are unacceptable and not fully effective performance, 3 is fully effective and 4 and 5 are significantly above expectation and outstanding. These KPA's include:

***I. Job Knowledge***

In line with PDMS directives, it is desired that an official should demonstrate an outstanding breadth of knowledge on a wide spectrum of related work areas and public service issues.

***II. Technical Skills***

An official should consistently exhibit exceptional technical/professional knowledge and abilities in connection with the designated occupation and those of a broader professional environment.

***III. Acceptance of Responsibility***

It is expected of the official to exceed normal expectations and accept responsibility competently for their own job function, those of subordinates and other employees in their absence. The official's demeanour should be exceptional, and he or she must display outstanding attributes far exceeding the job requirements.

***IV. Quality of Work***

The official must constantly produce exceptional work, accomplishing all main functions with a high level of precision.

***V. Reliability***

It is envisaged that the official should handle responsibility independently and accept additional tasks eagerly beyond his or her job description.

***VI. Initiative***

It is expected of the official to display a high level of initiative, normally with no supervision or counselling from management. The official should ideally be able to volunteer for additional job responsibilities.

#### ***VII. Communication***

An employee must ideally demonstrate an exceptional ability to communicate facts and ideas vividly and logically both orally and through communiqués. His or her work must require minimal supervision, editing or correction.

#### ***VIII. Interpersonal Relationships***

The employee must be a sought-after team member. He or she must be able to listen very well and be able to lead others to realise organisational goals. The employee must further display exceptionally sound and healthy conduct when interacting with other officials. He or she must also be able to gain the cooperation of others under complex circumstances.

#### ***IX. Flexibility***

Ideally, the official must regularly exceed all normal expectations, encouraging and promoting flexibility at every opportune moment.

#### ***X. Teamwork***

With minimum or no supervision, the employee must demonstrate exceptional capabilities working as a team member. He or she must also display a high level of cooperation communication skills and ability to lead and encourage other colleagues to achieve goals.

#### ***XI. Planning and Execution***

The official must display an exceptional ability to scope the length and difficulty of projects. He or she must be able to achieve results timeously and with the required quality. Furthermore, he or she must be able to develop work plans exceptionally well.

## ***XII. Leadership***

The employee should constantly maintain very high standards and manage to overcome challenges of motivation and control with minimum supervision or counselling from his or her seniors. Moreover, he or she must assist in the management and calculation of risks.

## ***XIII. Delegation and Empowerment***

The official must provide a clear understanding of responsibility and authority when delegating. He or she must also assign relevant tasks/functions to subordinates and provide the needed guidance and support. Moreover, he or she must develop human capital by providing relevant training and development opportunities.

## ***XIV. Management of Financial Resources***

It is envisaged that the officials must exhibit the capability and expertise in organising and controlling large volumes of resources, specialised work, and personnel. He or she must also consistently outline objectives, anticipate challenges, observe results, and demonstrate excellent budget control.

## ***XV. Management of Human Resources***

Lastly, the official should demonstrate exceptional delegation ability with either significant numbers of personnel or specialists. He or she must be able to train and trust staff using their potential, hosting meetings and formulating plans and objectives with them. Performance measurement commences with identifying key performance areas. A well-defined strategic plan will provide the basis for performance measurement in an organisation or institution. In summarising a list of measures that might be collected and reported, performance measurement efforts can benefit by focusing on those key performance areas that are cited in the overall strategic plan of the organisation or institution. These are pivotal to realising the organization's vision.

## **2.8 CHALLENGES OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS**

The difficulty of managing institutions or organisations is such that it requires senior managers to have business skills, understand the institutional culture and have the capacity to lead personnel. Failure to command proficient guidance and align human resource objectives with the organisation's vision contributes to the mismanagement of resources. Alshiha (2015) is of the view that the goal of management is to satisfy all stakeholders by forming value through internal processes. Executing performance management systems can be a mammoth task. There are several organizational and behavioural factors which can support, substitute or neutralize the impact and beneficial use of organisational performance management systems. Pandey (2005) posits that the success or failure of personnel management depends on the following organizational prerequisites:

- I. Senior management commitment and support,
- II. Ability to determine critical success factors (objectives),
- III. Translation of critical factors into measurable objectives and measures (metrics),
- IV. Linking of performance measures to rewards,
- V. Installation of a simple monitoring and tracking system,
- VI. Setting up a sound communication system to harness the advantages of the system inside the organization,
- VII. Enhancement of allocation of resources including human resources and linking of strategic planning to the performance management system.

Operating through internal processes serves as the basis for inculcating confidence in all stakeholders that the organisation is institutionalising. In the event that the organisation's management fails to properly manage strategic resources such as human capital, they face a risk of losing a significant part of their assets (Harangozo, 2020). In order to successfully implement the organisation's strategy and form value, senior managers must consciously focus on selecting and managing essential resources and functions as key components of a comprehensive system. Not only does physical assets have to be developed but even more the intangible strategic resources such as human capital, corporate relations, and innovation. Amongst other

functions, human capital is a strategic resource, hence management activities and communication about it should be open and transparent, its productivity must be carefully observed, and its contribution to strategy implementation monitored efficiently.

Strategic performance management systems play a critical role in modern-day organizations. They are formed, enforced and utilised to provide the necessary information about performance and the status of strategy execution in an organization (Harangozo, 2020). Leadership in an organisation or institution is one of the critical factors which determines the impact on the implementation and use of strategic performance management. The leadership of any organisation or institution which envisages successfully implementing performance management must ideally have attributes such as Accountability, Communication, Transparency, Integrity, and Capacity to lead. According to Claudia (2017), not all performance management evaluations have a positive effect, and therefore performance management evaluation can at times be perceived as one of the most ostracised activities and often viewed with a sense of fear and insecurity by personnel. The manner in which performance management evaluation system is utilised and the way the evaluation outcomes are conveyed can potentially determine the morale and the atmosphere of the organization and significantly the processes of training, improvement, promotion, reward, etc. Several factors can also have an influence on performance management and cause misconceptions. These include organisational history, organisational value system, the size of the organisation, union influences, and practices utilised in hiring and promotion.

In many organisations, informal assessments occur frequently, where managers and personnel assess one another. Because of this routine exercise of performance management, its multiple purposes are often unheeded thus rendering it as a mere typical administrative process. According to Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021), there are other critical goals of the organisation that performance management serves, they include:

- I. Communicating and inculcating strategic priorities,
- II. Supporting personnel development,
- III. Planning and maintaining high-quality personnel, and

#### **IV. Collecting data to support decision-making.**

Moments of crisis such as the recent advent of the COVID-19 global health pandemic can also result in serious personnel management challenges. Under such circumstances, several institutions and organisations often opt to downscale or wholly discontinue performance evaluations and reviews. This trend proves the point that many institutions and organisations are not putting into practice state-of-the-art performance management systems. Conversely, they just implement performance appraisal. Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021) make the point that personnel management is perfectly suited to address the many talent management challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis hence it serves critical administrative, strategic and communication, developmental, organizational maintenance, and documentation purposes. Hall (2017) avers that there are several obstacles that government institutions face in successfully carrying out performance-based management approaches. Among the obstacles identified are:

- I.** Inadequate administrative capacity,
- II.** Scant fiscal resources,
- III.** Insufficient economies of scale,
- IV.** Lack of comparable entities for benchmarking,
- V.** Insufficient utilisation of strategic planning,
- VI.** Complex implementation environments (intergovernmental, intersectoral, cooperative, and collaborative),

The main challenge of performance management is deciding on a list of key measures to follow. Most organisations tend to put emphasis on limited workload measures for internal management reasons. Others put their focus on outputs hence they represent intermediary progress toward realising organisational goals. On the other hand, there are organisations that put emphasis on outcomes because they characterise the strategic goals of the organisation; its *raison d'être*. Hall (2017) further states that operational concerns can result in a cacophony of frustration and resistance: what to measure, when, how, to whom should it be reported? Such questions should be addressed, and a clear and methodical approach developed for performance management to be successful.

Maake, Harmse and Schultz (2021) posit that the following recommendations should be considered in order to improve personnel management practices in the South African public sector:

- Supervisors must provide adequate and regular feedback to subordinates.
- Reliable information and feedback should focus on both employees' weaknesses and strengths. This is critical if supervisors are to address the underperformance of employees specifically and not ignore problems.
- Feedback on underperformance must be provided with sensitivity and insight to minimise rejection and negativity on the part of employees.
- Management must ensure that the mechanisms and procedures of performance management are perceived as consistent, fair, relevant, transparent, and unbiased and that performance management procedures are clearly communicated to employees. Otherwise, if the process is perceived as ineffectual, employees may refuse to cooperate with supervisors, and the public sector may lose its employees' loyalty, good faith, and trust.

According to Kaupa and Atiku (2020), there should be proper training on the performance management cycle in line with supervisors' and employees' key performance indicators. The training must emphasise how the performance management system works and how it will be utilised in the public sector as well as its intended goals and objectives. On poor communication of the performance feedback, Kaupa and Atiku (2020) further posit that extensive communication and publication of the performance management system to employees and supervisors. Effective communication is pivotal in ensuring that employees and supervisors understand their anticipated levels of work outcomes within the public sector. The absence of performance feedback leads to a breakdown in employee attitudes towards organizational goals and objectives, which, in turn, leads to the inefficiency of the organization.

Lack of communication on performance management policy framework within any organization leads to its rejection by employees. Senior management personnel in the public sector must take advantage of information technology in order to improve employee engagement. For example, the performance management policy framework can be uploaded on the internal staff portal of the organization and refer

employees to the document through email notification. Effective communication is imperative at every phase of the performance management cycle in the public sector. At the performance planning stage, the supervisors need to engage their subordinates in setting vivid and succinct performance objectives. The performance objectives must be attainable, measurable, realistic, specific, and time-bound. Proper communication is also vital during performance assessment and in providing feedback to support employees in ensuring performance improvement, especially when the areas of weaknesses are identified. The support from management may include the provision of training and development opportunities to improve the work outcomes of subordinates.

## **2.9 THEORIES UNDERPINNING THE STUDY**

### **2.9.1 Scientific Management Theory (Taylorism)**

Kozaki and Nakamura (2018) defined Taylorism as a theory of scientific management of work systems which is aimed at making the workplace more organised such that labour productivity is maximised. Taylor's model of scientific management featured prominently as a concept of management from the period starting from 1900 until 1930. Following this period, trade unions protested heavily against scientific management principles. This was because trade unions held a view that Taylorism could not meet their needs as employees and failed to motivate them to work (Badom and Girigiri 2021). Employees are the greatest asset of any organisation or institution. They should thus be managed in order to achieve set performance objectives. Human resources management is the foundation of all other management activities in any workplace or professional setting. Badom and Girigiri (2021) stressed that, in a quest to attain organisational goals, there is a necessity to manage personnel with established knowledge which scientifically related methods yield. According to Sementelli (2019), Taylor's techniques were developed for semi-skilled and un-skilled workers who performed manufacturing jobs for moderately sophisticated and well-versed consumers. Taylorism was therefore geared towards the codification of management and the regulation and control of production in the workplace. Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2005; 9) presented the following core principles which form the basis for Taylor's concept of scientific personnel management:

- I. Develop an empirical approach for each element of an employee's task, which replaces the old rule-of-thumb method;
- II. Select and then train, teach, and develop an employee using scientific means, whereas in the past an employee chose the tasks to perform and was self-trained;
- III. Foster a culture of collegiality and corporation to ensure that all tasks are done in-line with the principles of science and;
- IV. Provide an almost equal division of the work and the responsibility between employers and employees.

Similarly, Peci (2009) posits that Taylor made the case about aspects envisioned by the scientific management theory as follows:

- I. **National efficiency:** the end result of putting his methods into practice must lead not only to an increased efficiency in workstations but also to an increased efficiency in national terms;
- II. **A change of workers' mental attitude:** Taylor argued that the change from empirical administration to scientific administration, included the whole transformation of workers' mental attitude regarding their tasks and their superiors.
- III. **The empirical character of administration:** the new administration brought forth by Taylor, was a science led by well-defined norms, laws, and principles. He further proposed that the fundamental principles of scientific administration could be applied beyond the workplace and in other spheres of life.

Taylorism seeks to address the question of increased productivity. For the above-mentioned principles to be successfully implemented, a complete paradigm shift in terms of how management and workers view the workplace, and its operations ought to take place. Taylor was convinced that both the management and workers have a common interest in increasing productivity in any workplace or institution. Taylor further based his concept of personnel management on production-line time studies. This concept of personnel management doesn't rely on traditional labour methods; instead, it is informed by the systematic analysis of workers' movements while they execute their respective tasks. Implementing time study, this concept breaks each task down into its components and designs the fastest and most appropriate method

of performing each component (Paramboor and Ibrahim, 2018). Taylorism stresses that employees ought to always be consulted in a cooperative fashion to reap creative outcomes throughout the execution of their tasks. Taylorism represents an organizational form without any notion of a career-structure, unlike other organizational models available at the turn of the century. Therefore, Taylorism can be defined as the bureaucratization of the structure of control.

According to Wren (2011), Taylorism, as authored by Frederick Winslow Taylor, continues to be at the top of the list of contributors to the history of management thought. Wren (2011) also holds the view that Scientific Management Principles are widely accepted as the most effective management tool of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Taylor's four great principles are as follows:

1. There is a necessity to create a science of work that can substitute out-dated methods in the field of management. This implies finding the most suitable method needed to perform a job. Salaries and other incentives to personnel must be related to achieving maximum goals. Failure to achieve these targets will result in loss of profits by the organization.
2. Personnel who will work in the institution must be scientifically chosen or trained at a level that can perform a job in the best way. Various personnel must be selected for each job in order to maximise the level of expertise in the tasks performed in terms of their position within the organization.
3. The science of work should be combined with selected and trained personnel to achieve the maximum results.
4. Tasks and responsibilities must be distributed equally between employees and management.

Taylor's objective is to substitute the basic rule methods with scientific methods. Therefore, the selection of personnel has been central to Taylor's comprehensive system. The first step in scientific management is to examine the performance of techniques that are always associated with personnel, such as tools of trade, shape and selection of instruments, measurement, and control equipment. According to Zuffo (2011), Taylor's model is a model in which the product, process, equipment, and vehicle techniques are in a systematic balance with the personnel, together with the working methods and control systems. Within Taylor's views, the concept of

personnel is in harmony with these factors. Taylor outlined a multidisciplinary management model.

### **2.9.2 Human Capital Theory**

Human Capital Theory is underpinned by the core principle which is heavily based on the conviction that people's learning capabilities are of comparable value to other resources involved in the production of goods and services. When resources are efficiently used, the outcomes are beneficial for the worker, the organisation as well as society in general. Human Capital Theory is concerned with the gains of training and education as a type of investment in personnel. Therefore, based on this assertion, the fundamental proposition is that personnel are viewed as a form of capital for development (Nafukho, Hairston and Brooks, 2004). Human capital theory not only focuses on education but also the general health of the employee as an input to economic production, while human capital development (expenditure on education or training as a proxy) refers to the attainment and an increase in the number of people who have the skills, expertise, and experience that are crucial for the economic growth of a nation (Adelakun, 2011).

According to Namasivayam and Denizci (2006 cited in Aliu and Aigbavboa, 2019), Human Capital also refers to education, knowledge, work competence and even psychometric assessments. Zhao (2008) states that philosophies about human capital continued to develop over the past centuries, however, these philosophies really took form as a theory during the 1960s in the West. The economic and cultural contributions of the theory of human capital are extensively recognised. Human Capital Theory developed on the basis of Western economic theory and studies about the behaviour of personnel. The determinant of economic growth in the West has been transformed from physical materials to human capital, and the emphasis on the conduct of personnel has garnered more attention from theoretical and industrial perspectives. Zhao (2008; 802) further posits that "The conceptualization and theorization of human capital has been promoted and prevailed in Western nations and the research outcomes of human capital and related theories have made great contributions to social, economic, and corporate development".

An economy that is knowledge-based brings forth several opportunities as well as challenges that necessitate a transformation of businesses, policies, education, and perceptions. Moreover, it also establishes conditions to further implement classical human capital theories in all aspects, from state-level to businesses, and from national-level to individuals. The success of institutions and organisations in a knowledge-based economy depends on knowledge that exists within those institutions and organisations in the form of personnel. A contemporary challenge confronting organisations and institutions is how to put into practice existing knowledge to create competitive advantages that are sustainable. This challenge requires organisations to provide their consumers with value-added services. This also implies that they must possess capabilities in communication and knowledge.

Galiakberova (2019) is of the view that any country's economy is built by people and is reliant on them as they execute their economic activities in everyday life. We can, therefore, deduce that the whole set of personnel knowledge, expertise, capabilities, as well as motivations is individual capital. In the labour market, people come with varying levels of education, knowledge, and expertise. Each country's human capital comprises of social and national priorities, intellectual resources, competitive prospects for the nation, identity, and national cultural potential. A constant and complex interface between educational and economic processes is prevalent in every society. The economy of each country plays a pivotal role in sustaining and developing the education system hence each facet of the economic system has an effect on society in general. "The intellectual and qualification potential created to a great extent in the education system is of great importance for the economy" avers (Galiakberova, 2019; 411). The educational sphere relies on funding that is availed from various sources such as the fiscal at all levels, taxes, and businesses. Therefore, the educational sphere relies on the affluence of the citizenry and the profits collected by businesses.

UNESCO (1997 cited in Osiobe, 2019) states that statistics have proved that people with higher levels of education generally earn more wages, have higher earning opportunities, and are more capable of improving the quality of their lives than those with less education. In broader terms, education affects economic growth by increasing innovation and knowledge/technology spillover. Improvement in knowledge and technological skills can bring forth increased economic activity, which

can result in short and long-term economic advancement. The correlation between education and poverty is thus defined: people who have acquired a higher degree of education earn more wages or have higher earning opportunities and are most able to improve the quality of their lives as compared to those with a lesser educational background.

Becker (2002 cited in Aliu and Aigbavboa, 2019) is of the view that there are three aspects of the capital concept (financial capital, human capital, and physical capital). They further make a distinction between general human capital and specific human capital. General human capital (generic skills) is the knowledge obtained through formal education and training which can be beneficial across all fronts. In contrast, specific human capital refers to specific skills and knowledge attained through education and training that are essential to function effectively in a particular work environment. They can also be perceived as context-specific skills.

Education is, therefore, the first step in the path of economic development process, hence, education plays a critical role in establishing a nation's human capital capacity as well as promoting economic growth. According to Wuttaphan (2017) organisations and institutions invest in human capital through education and training hence they perceive personnel as an asset and anticipate that what they have invested will be returned and give a positive value in future, for example, personnel's expertise will be enhanced for their career growth. Investing in human capital can also make employees feel valued. The principle of being valued as an employee, in the workplace context, according to effort and aptitude is appealing (Hickman, 2021). Just as with any other asserts, personnel expertise can be classified as fundamental or peripheral assets.

Fundamental assets are important to the organisation's competitive advantage in the market, and they demand constant internal improvement. It is perilous for an organisation to outsource these kinds of assets hence this can potentially harm the competitive advantage of the organisation by eroding its stock of fundamental skills. Nafukho et al (2004) similarly contend that the main result from investing in personnel is the transformation that is demonstrated at the individual level in the form of enhanced performance, and at the organisational level in the form of

enhanced productivity and profitability or at a public level in the form of profits that benefit the public in general.

## **2.10 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the literature review and theoretical framework related to the study were discussed in detail. Various concepts were defined, explained and clarified using literature from other sources and scholars. A case was made for the continued importance and relevance of Personnel Management within government institutions. In this regard, the researcher outlined phases/steps that must be given attention when discussing Personnel Management. The researcher further outlined other concepts such as Human Resource Management (HRM) and Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and compared them to establish a distinction. It was discovered that SHRM derives its existence from HRM hence managing human resources must align with strategic objectives of the institution or organisation. In this chapter, the researcher argued that there must be an alignment of institutional environment and human resource management practices.

Another key concept that was discussed is Performance Appraisal (PA) with a particular focus on its relevance and importance in public institutions. The researcher recommended that PA be a constant feature in how personnel are managed. The introduction and establishment of the Senior Management Service (SMS) cohort in the South African civil service was investigated and discussed. The researcher identified where this concept originated from and why the post-apartheid South African civil service embraced it. It was found that SMS is intended to professionalise the civil service by attracting and preserving skilled personnel to lead development. The researcher went at lengths to illustrate the organisational structure of GCIS Free State provincial office and outlined the office's key mandate. The PDMS framework was also discussed with a particular emphasis on fifteen KPAs that are utilised to assess job competencies and identify developmental areas for each employee. Theories that have been discussed in this chapter include the Scientific Management Theory (Taylorism) as well as the Human Capital Theory. Various viewpoints and arguments were considered from other scholars and the scholar also explored his sentiments around the topic. In conclusion, this chapter discussed challenges of personnel management.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter presented a literature review on concepts such as Personnel Management, Strategic Human Resource Management, Performance Appraisal, Senior Management Services as well as Performance Management and Development System. Furthermore, the last part of the preceding chapter examined the theoretical framework of the study. This study was specifically pursued to analyse personnel management towards the performance of Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Free State Office in terms of providing services to government communications and citizens of the Free State Province. This chapter of the study explains the research design, the research methods, data collection techniques and analysis, and the population and sample.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design follows a cyclical approach in which a problem is analysed, a solution designed, implemented and tested, and the results used to inform a second, third and even fourth cycle of design and development (Cronje 2020; 17). This research study employed qualitative research. Research design is a strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be utilised and the data analysis to be done. Qualitative description is well suited to studies that involve mixed methods or questionnaire design, or where there is a need to develop straight forward and first-hand description of the facts of the phenomena, such as personnel's knowledge of an event or experience. It is also very useful to perform a qualitative descriptive study prior to developing an intervention (Turale 2020).

##### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is an essential data collection instrument for a variety of methods utilised within the broad spectrum of academic research (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl; 2019). Qualitative research includes the studied utilisation and collection of a range of empirical data – artefacts; case studies; cultural texts and

productions; interviews; introspection; life stories; observations personal experiences; and visual texts – that explain the routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives (Denzin, Norman and Lincoln 2011). Qualitative researchers often use a variety of related interpretative practices with the aim of gaining more knowledge about the subject which they are researching. It is generally understood that each practice produces different results or reveals a different outlook on the subject matter hence there is frequently a commitment to utilising more than one interpretative practice in any study. Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel and Cook (2020) aver that, in any type of qualitative research study, it is the responsibility of the researcher to consider the appropriateness of the research strategies.

Considering the above-mentioned avowals, the researcher adopted the qualitative research approach hence it presented an opportunity for an interactive experience with participants. This approach further facilitated meaningful and more in-depth responses thus assisting to achieve the intended goals of the study.

### **3.3 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

It is important for the researcher to determine the population parameters of the proposed study before establishing a sample. The population parameters include the nature, size, and unique characteristics of the population. For this study, the targeted population was the Senior, Middle and Junior Management of GCIS staff employed by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) at its Provincial Office in Free State since this research was focused on assessing the personnel management of GCIS at provincial level where the direction and overall strategy of the institution is determined and led in the province. The composition of Senior, Middle and Junior Management staff at GCIS Free State is as follows: Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Regional Coordinators in all districts. Other members of staff such as the Admin Officer, Senior Secretary and General Worker were exempted from the target population as they do not form part of management.

**Table 3.1: Target Population**

<b>GCIS Management in Free State</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Recommended sample size</b>
Director	1	1
Deputy Director	1	1
Assistant Director	1	1
Regional Coordinators	5	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>

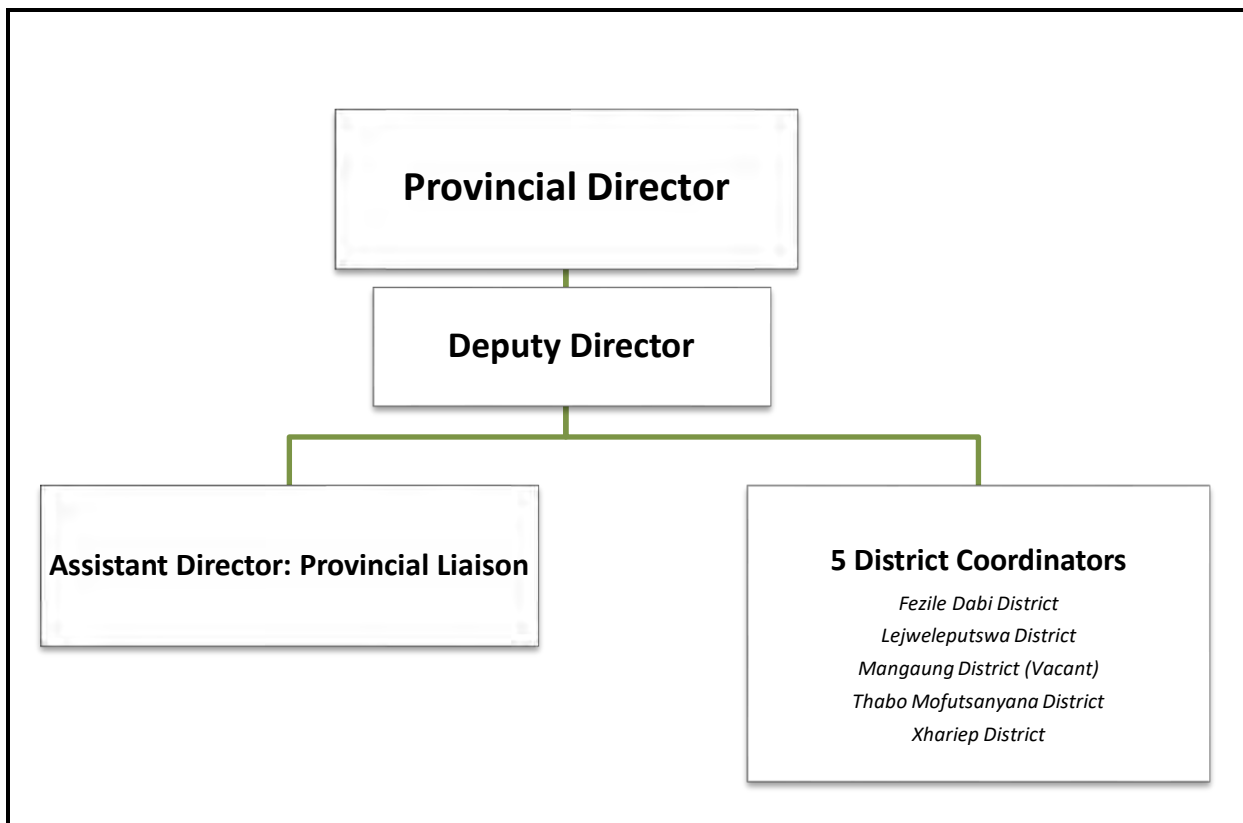
Neuman (2011) describes sampling as getting a representative or a small collection of units, or cases from a much larger collection of units or cases from a larger collection of population, such that the researcher can study the smaller group and produce accurate generalization about the larger group. In this research study, the recommended sample size of six (6) participants out of a total population of eight (8) officials totalled a 75% representation and was enough for the researcher to make accurate generalisation.

### **3.4 GCIS FREE STATE ORGANOGRAM**

According to the organisational structure of GCIS, there are provincial offices located in all nine (9) provinces across the country and the majority of GCIS district offices are located at Thusong Service Centres across all district municipalities. Thusong Service Centres are one-stop-shops for all government services and information offered to local communities. Provincial Offices are mainly mandated to disseminate the National Communication Strategy to stakeholders and key partners at a provincial sphere. This is to ensure that the enforcement of development communication campaigns and programmes in-line with the Government Communication Programme ensues. GCIS Provincial Offices work closely with government at a provincial sphere, particularly the Office of the Premier, to ensure that government messages are cascaded to the general public.

The GCIS Provincial Office is mandated to promote an effective government communication system within the province and at a local sphere of government by establishing strategic relations and partnerships in the communication environment.

It is expected of all GCIS Provincial Offices to develop a clear comprehension of the information needs of the citizenry as well as communication needs of government. It is further anticipated of GCIS Provincial Offices to coordinate the distribution of government publicity using a network of community-based distribution points. Thusong Service Centres are also marketed by GCIS Provincial Offices hence they are located in districts. The organisational structure of the GCIS Free State Provincial Office is as follows:



**Figure 3.1:** GCIS Free State Organogram (GCIS Free State, 2022)

### 3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Thomas, Oenning & Garcia de Goulart, (2018) aver that before selecting research instruments, a literature review must be conducted to ascertain if a validated instrument for the theme in question exists. If there is a need for a research tool to be created, a search in the literature for the recommended scale and items more relevant to respond to the purpose of the study should be done. Leedy & Ormrod, (2001) state that many scholars contend that the selection of data collection

instrument is informed by the objective of study being undertaken. It is for this reason that the researcher should adopt the appropriate instrument.

A research instrument with a suitable structure must take into consideration the kind of questions, the language used, which should be relevant for the target population. Research questions must be drafted in a manner that is understandable, free from bias, and appropriate to the level of education and culture of the target population (Thomas et al, 2018). In this study in-depth interviews and observations were utilised to collect data, particularly from the Management of GCIS Free State. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with GCIS" Free State management staff to obtain data which is useful about the GCIS"s personnel management and performance in Free State Province. For justification of the research instrument utilised in this study, in-depth interviews and observation are defined below:

### **3.5.1 In-depth Interviews**

Face-to-face interviewing and in-person interviews are the traditional form of generating data in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013). It is also important for researchers to be cognisant of the venue where the interview will be conducted as this can affect the data collection process. Another factor that can determine the success or otherwise of the interview process is the researcher"s familiarity with the data recording equipment. It is also recommended that in-depth interviews be conducted in a conducive setting, free from potential disruption and at a time convenient to the respondents (Illing, 2014). According to McGrath et al. (2019) the following guidelines can be employed to ensure that the interview process yields tangible results:

- I. Identify when qualitative research interviews are suitable** – Qualitative research interviews are more suitable when the researcher seeks to comprehend the respondents" subjective perspective of a phenomenon rather than generating generalizable understandings of large groups of people.
- II. Prepare yourself as an interviewer** – Successful interviews commence with systematic planning that considers the focus and scope of the research question. Background reading of the literature concerning the research area as well as how to conduct in-depth interviews are necessary in the development of research questions.

- III. Construct an interview guide and test your questions** – By conducting test interviews the researcher gains skills before commencing the actual data collection process. Such test interviews can be conducted with peers or volunteers.
- IV. Consider cultural and power dimensions of the interview situation** – Assessing cultural dimensions and power dimensions is important before the interview. Such an analysis can include a consideration of what the interview situation allows and what challenges are likely to occur.
- V. Build rapport with your respondents** – Establishing cordial interactions during the in-depth interview process is very critical and should preferably be formed prior to the actual interview, but moreover, during the interview itself.

Conversely, in-depth interviews often pose several challenges to researchers as they are recorded and require transcription before they can be analysed. Such an exercise can be time-consuming. Another factor is that the analysis itself is also time-consuming, requires transcriptions to be poured word-for-word and line-by-line. When conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher needs to tread carefully not to ask leading questions or provide non-verbal communication that can possibly influence the participants’ answers. This is to ensure that there is no bias in the process (Barrett and Twycross, 2018).

Moreover, in this research, questions that were drafted and posed to participants during the interview process sought to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of insufficient personnel towards performance of the GCIS Free State Provincial Office. These questions also correlated with research objectives and further assisted in answering research questions. For example, a total of 5 questions were asked and were structured as follows:

	<b>Research Objectives</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
<b>1</b>	Investigate how personnel is managed in GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing, and reporting government events, policies, and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does GCIS ensure that it attracts skilled employees at all levels?</li> <li>• How does GCIS empower staff with the tools they need to deliver on its constitutional mandate?</li> </ul>

2	Determine qualitatively the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State?</li> </ul>
3	Explore the extent at which personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does personnel management affect the performance of GCIS?</li> </ul>
4	Suggest and recommend possible solutions to address personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the possible solutions that can curb personnel management challenges for GCIS?</li> </ul>

**Table 3.2: Interview Questions**

### 3.5.2 Types of Interviews

- **Open or unstructured interview** – is normally based on a single question. The researcher and the respondent shape the conversation in real time instead of following a written schedule.
- **Semi-structured interview** – in semi-structured interviews, data is captured in key areas while allowing respondents to express their perspective and personality in the discussion. Semi-structured interviews are structured to give the researcher control hence responses are verbal and not written. In this study, semi-structured interviews were employed (Seboko, 2020).

### 3.5.3 Observations

Through observation, the researcher can judge and watch human actions with the aim of comprehending reasons for such actions and their influence in real-life scenarios (Johnson, 2014). In this study, the behavioural patterns were to understand challenges of personnel management and performance in the organisational context. The phenomenon of interest was to identify, through observations, the challenges that influenced effective personnel management in the organisational context. Some participants freely answered all questions that were asked while others did not show interest in answering certain questions that they felt

were out of their scope or sensitive for them. During the interview process, the researcher also identified, through observation, that some participants were having grievances and were not satisfied with how certain issues were handled within the organisation.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

The data for this study was collected through in-depth interviews and observations of participants. The interview schedule included semi-structured questions to collect qualitative data from the participants. The interview schedules were arranged by the researcher. The presence of the researcher assisted in explaining unclear questions asked of respondents to ensure that correct answers are obtained. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. Furthermore, the researcher must be instinctive, conscious, and cognisant of how his or her role can affect the conversation with the respondent. In in-depth interviews, the researcher must not be perceived to be contaminating or biasing the data, but rather as a co-creator of data in partnership with the respondent. To this end, the researcher is not a passive player during the data collection process, but an instrument utilising his and her abilities, experiences, and competencies in the interview situation (Lingard and Kennedy 2010). When seeking to gain knowledge about how decisions are made and how interventions can improve a certain situation, qualitative research requires data which is all-inclusive, nuanced, and rich for themes and results to emerge (Barrett and Twycross, 2018).

To collect the data for this study, an appointment was scheduled with the Provincial Director of GCIS in Free State to seek permission from the Provincial Director to conduct interviews with the Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Regional Coordinators within GCIS Free State. Once permission was granted on 17 July 2022, meetings with these managers were arranged to explain the rationale behind the significance of consenting to conduct interviews. Due to tight work schedules and travelling challenges to various districts in the province, interviews took place over a two-month period from August 2022 until September 2022.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

It remains important for researchers to not be swayed in assuming that the process of data analysis in qualitative description does not involve interpretation of the meaning of participants' statements. This does need to occur to a certain extent, but not to the depth of other interpretative approaches. Researchers need to pay attention to interpreting data in a meaningful, correct, and rigorous fashion, albeit flexible as the occasion demands. This is especially evident in the data analysis process where the researchers sort and code the data, using a system of content analysis that can be modified, and to develop categories (Sandelowski, 2010). The data for this study was analysed utilising a qualitative analysis and interpretation where a thematic analysis was employed.

To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative data driven explorations, member checking, also known as interviewee validation or respondent validation, can be utilised. Member checking is a method of returning an interview transcript or debriefing the analytical results with respondents for consensus (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Creswell 2013). This process offers the researcher a perfect opportunity to observe the quality of the data collected. For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted follow-up sessions with all respondents telephonically on questions that were not clearly articulated or vaguely answered.

#### **3.7.1 Credibility**

Credibility is a matter of persuasion whereby the researcher is perceived as having made practices that are visible and auditable. A research study can be considered trustworthy only if the reader of the research report judges it to be so. Member checks are regarded as the single most critical technique for establishing credibility. (Gunawan, 2015). According to Macnee & McCabe (2008), Credibility refers to the confidence that can be placed in the truthfulness of research findings. Member checking is defined as a validating procedure (Yin, 2013) for the overall quality of a study. Leavy (2014), recommended crosschecking the data collected by inviting participants to read and reread to check their transcribed interviews for accuracy. This strategy was used to determine if participants believed the transcripts reflected their responses to questions accurately and to assess if the analyses were credible and plausible. The researcher met with participants to afford them the opportunity to

review the transcribed material as well as conclusions, to determine if the findings accurately reflected their feelings and experiences (Maxwell, 2012; Silverman, 2011).

### **3.7.2 Reliability**

The reliability and credibility of the research finding which the researcher used to collect data for this study was qualitative investigation and the following method was used, namely: individual interviewing and the researcher considered literature to obtain corroborating evidence (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:239), in an effort to reduce bias and to cross-examine the integrity of participants' responses. In this study, reliability was done during and after data collection. The researcher ensured validity and reliability of the tools through member checking by sharing the results of the collected data with participants in order to reach common ground on the authenticity of findings.

### **3.7.3 Validity**

In qualitative studies, validity refers to the accurateness of the data collected. This implies that the data collected by the researcher can be deemed valid if the results of the measurement process are accurate.

### **3.7.4 Transferability**

Transferability, which is a form of external validity; and confirmability, which is mainly concerned with presentation. In qualitative studies transferability methods are utilised by the researcher to allow the reader of the research to make conclusions from the research that relates to their own situation and contribute to the quality of the research. In this study, transferability was ensured through providing detailed descriptions of the research methodology as well as the findings obtained.

## **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In qualitative studies, ethical considerations have a particular resonance because of the detailed nature of the study process. The protection of participants through the application of appropriate ethical principles is critical in all research study (Arifin, 2018). This study was guided by research ethics of University of Zululand or research policy of the university. Ethical issues were considered when conducting

research. The researcher used the information on primary and secondary literature in a proper manner and acknowledged the sources of information to avoid plagiarism. The researcher was, to the best of his knowledge, honest in conducting the study to guide against misleading the study by reporting or using false information. The researcher also did a thorough review of the literature to ensure that the study has not been conducted elsewhere. This study also received permission from the Ethics Committee of the University of Zululand as well as the GCIS. According to Arifin (2018), there are seven (7) critical ethical issues that must be considered in any qualitative study, and these are:

- I. Informed consent and voluntary participation
- II. Anonymity and confidentiality
- III. Telephone communication
- IV. Interview session
- V. Data analysis and dissemination of the findings
- VI. Ethical approval and access to participants
- VII. Data protection

The onus is on the qualitative researcher to keep the participants' identity confidential throughout the process, guarantee participants' power of freedom of choice, and promote honest research reporting without deception.

### **3.9 LIMITATIONS**

Limitations of the study are those factors that hinder the study and may affect the completion of the study. This study was limited to GCIS Free State; therefore, findings of this study will not be generalised to other government departments, spheres or entities involved in government communication. The researcher sought to make deliberate exclusionary and inclusionary decisions concerning the population (sample procedure and size – including such information as geographic location), methodological orientation, theoretical perspectives, instruments, methods of data collection and analysis. The following characteristics were selected as contributors to the delimitation of the study:

- I. **Choice of methodology and design** – This study was restricted to qualitative research, in order to discover participant's experiences,

perceptions and knowledge of the phenomena under investigation. Moreover, this study sought to further assess the institutional performance of GCIS in providing strategic leadership in government communication.

- II. Inclusionary delimitations (participants)** – The target population of this study was officials employed by the GCIS Free State. However, to solicit direct and accurate answers to the research problem and questions at hand, the study required a sample of participants with intimate knowledge of the phenomena under investigation, particularly the selected Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Regional Coordinators within GCIS Free State. These participants were selected due to the assumed knowledge and experience that they possess, and their direct contact with governance initiatives and leadership role at GCIS Free State.
- III. Exclusionary delimitations (participants)** – Other members of the target population were not sampled out of convenience; time constraints and economic limitations. Additionally, lower ranking officials of the GCIS Free State were not incorporated in the sample, hence the study assumed that they did not work closely with the topic under investigation and as such would not necessarily assist in achieving the goal of the study.
- IV. Phenomena under investigation** – This study was delimited assessing the institutional performance of GCIS Free State in providing strategic leadership in government communication. As a result, the study was only concerned with how GCIS Free State is performing as a central communication service for the province. Consequently, other variables that could've contributed were not measured.
- V. Inclusionary delimitations (instrumentation)** – For the purpose of data collection, the study focused on collecting data through in-depth interviews with the Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Regional Coordinators within GCIS Free State. This method was appropriate for an interpretivist study which is concerned with social context and reality.
- VI. Exclusionary delimitations (instrumentation)** – As stipulated above, qualitative methods and techniques for both data collection and analysis were utilised hence the exploratory nature of this study.

- VII. Inclusionary delimitations (generalisability)** – The results of this study are generalisable to the target population and the study's setting – the GCIS Free State Office.
- VIII. Exclusionary delimitations (generalisability)** – The results of this study are not generalisable to other government departments or institutions, nonetheless, they can serve as a point of reference for future research and can assist other scholars interested in the same topic.

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the research methodology as well as other components were discussed. These components comprised of research design, research instruments, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, ethical considerations, limitations of the study, target population and sampling. The researcher also deliberated reasons for selecting these components and how they were utilised to construct evidence to answer the research question on the personnel management and the performance of GCIS, Free State Province. Chapter four (4) presents results, their discussion and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology of this study and explained in detail, the research design, research methods, data collection techniques and analysis, as well as the population and sample. The main purpose of this chapter is to present the data collected, analyse, and interpret it. Furthermore, the data presentation and discussion in this chapter give effect to empirical findings related to the research questions and objectives outlined in chapter one. Ramodibe (2017:135) posits that, “data analysis assists the researcher to interpret and make sense of the information collected, in order to make informed conclusions”. To this end, data was analysed utilising a qualitative analysis and interpretation where a thematic analysis was employed.

#### 4.2 SECTION A: DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

In Table 4.1 below participants are classified according to gender, age, race, designation, education, and years of service as an employee at the GCIS. The interview number indicates the order in which interviews ensued, whereas verbatim responses are captured in a manner that ensures a correct reference to individual participants. To explain the data, findings were correlated with literature so as to provide their relevance with regard to the current literature review. The biographical information of the sample is as follows:

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	3	50%
	Female	3	50%
	Total	6	100%
Age	21-30	0	0%
	31-40	2	33%
	41-50	4	67%
	51-60	0	0%
	Total	6	100%

Race	African	6	100%
	Coloured	0	0%
	White	0	0%
	Total	6	100%
Designation	Director	1	16.7%
	Deputy Director	1	16.7%
	Assistant Director	1	16.7%
	Regional Coordinator	3	50%
	Total	6	100%
Education	Primary	0	0%
	Secondary	0	0%
	Tertiary	6	100%
	Total	6	100%
Years of Service	0-5	2	33%
	6-10	0	0%
	11-15	3	50%
	16-20	1	17%
	Total	6	100%

**Table 4.1:** Biographical information of the sample

#### 4.2.1 Biographical Interpretation

The sample of the study comprised of 50% male and 50% female participants. This implies that both males and females at the GCIS Free State participate equally in Personnel Management activities. The objective of this information is to draw attention to the gender parity of participants. In Table 4.1 above, it is indicated that 33% of the sample is aged between 31-40 years, whereas 67% is aged between 41-50 years. It may be deduced that the reason for this could be that GCIS Free State recruits young people to fill vacant posts and that they gain knowledge from middle-aged personnel who possess institutional memory. The objective of this information is to draw attention to the age of participants.

Moreover, Table 4.1 illustrates that 100% of participants are Africans. This could be because GCIS Free State strives to deliver government communication through mediums and languages that most citizens in rural settings (majority of whom are Africans) can understand. Furthermore, 50% of the study sample is Regional Coordinators spread out across districts in the Free State Province. 16.7% represents managers at Director level, Deputy Director level as well as Assistant Director level respectively. 100% of the participants hold a tertiary qualification. This is because of the nature of technical competency and job requirements associated with most posts at the GCIS Free State as a leader of government communication.

Lastly, in Table 4.1, it is illustrated that 50% of the study sample has long service of 11-15 years while 17% has long service of 16-20 years. This suggests that, generally, GCIS Free State management is made up of personnel which was recruited at a youthful age and has risen through the ranks. Again, according to Table 4.1, 33% of the study sample has spent 0-5 years at the employment of GCIS Free State. It can be assumed that this is part of the succession strategy of GCIS Free State – to groom a second layer of talent and future leadership.

#### **4.3 SECTION B: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

This section of the chapter outlines the findings from the interviews conducted with participants. The study had four (4) major objectives which were:

- To investigate how personnel are managed in GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing, and reporting government events, policies, and programmes.
- To determine qualitatively the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State.
- To explore the extent at which personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State.
- To suggest and recommend possible solutions to address personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State.

These objectives were then translated into research questions, which were:

- How does GCIS ensure that it attracts skilled employees at all levels?

- How does GCIS empower staff with the tools they need to deliver on its constitutional mandate?
- What are the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State?
- To what extent does personnel management affect the performance of GCIS?
- What are the possible solutions that can curb personnel management challenges for GCIS?

Emanating from the interview questions, the researcher identified and discussed four main themes. Furthermore, verbatim quotations as well as paraphrased statements from participants are also discussed. Table 4.2 below illustrates the content analysis of the transcripts with regard to personnel management. The content analysis gave rise to the conceptualisation of main themes and sub-themes. These themes are: (1) Personnel recruitment, training, and retention (2) Personnel challenges (3) Effect of personnel management on performance (4) Solutions to curb personnel management challenges.

#### 4.3.1 Personnel Recruitment, Training and Retention

The first theme is derived from the first two research questions “How does GCIS ensure that it attracts skilled employees at all levels?” and “How does GCIS empower staff with the tools they need to deliver on its constitutional mandate?” The sub-themes that emerged are: academic qualifications and work experience, and human resource function as discussed below:

Theme	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Personnel recruitment, training, and retention.	1. Academic qualifications and work experience.	Participants mentioned that there are specific skills that are needed for one to be employed at the GCIS Free State. These include academic qualifications and work experience in the field of media and communication.

	2. Human Resource Function.	Participants also highlighted the fact that personnel recruitment, training, and retention is primarily a role performed by the Human Resource directorate.
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**Table 4.2** Personnel recruitment, training, and retention.

#### 4.3.1.1 Discussion of sub-themes

- *Academic qualifications and work experience*

All participants stated that personnel recruitment is based on specific job requirements which are typically outlined in every advertised post. Chief among these, is the prospective candidate’s educational qualifications and work experience in the area of the post. As previously stated, all participants hold a tertiary qualification. This is in-line with minimum job requirements of most posts at the GCIS Free State. This sub-theme emerged from the main theme „Personnel recruitment, training and retention“.

Participant 1 stated that:

*“Usually when a vacant post is advertised, we look for critical skills that are needed in the organisation. In more recent times, we have had to specifically look for candidates with media skills and training because we carry out a number of community outreach programmes and we must ensure that our communication reaches all citizens. To empower staff and provide continuous training, the GCIS Training and Development Unit has put in place a Bursary Committee to allocate bursaries to officials who wish to further their studies. Of course, this is determined by the institutional budget and there might be limitations here and there. Above that, the Training and Development Unit also arranges short learning programmes in partnership with institutions of higher learning and the National School of Government” PT1 (Participant 1).*

This assertion was corroborated by Participant 2 who also averred:

*“Academic qualifications and relevant work experience are important when applying for a post at GCIS Free State, with the exception of low-level posts such as cleaners. Other than that, exposure to the media environment is an added advantage in most instances. In our annual performance plans, we usually elect 2 key areas of development and short learning programmes are arranged by the employer. So far, I think GCIS has been complying” PT2 (Participant 2).*

From the verbatim quotations of statement made by participants, it is evident that the calibre of GCIS Free State personnel that is needed to carry out its mandate is one that has academic qualifications. The above assertions by participants are supported by Salwa and Lian (2019: 969) who contend that, “Qualifications mean the requirements that must be met are related to the abilities needed to carry out a job. Qualifications can show someone's credibility in carrying out their work. Qualifications can also be interpreted as competencies that a person must have in carrying out his duties”. It can therefore be deduced that by qualified personnel, we mean personnel which meets the minimum standards of the posts and is competent enough to master the duties that are associated with the posts. Hvidman and Andersen (2014) even contend that, the actual utilisation of performance information appears to be dependent on the availability of incentives, educational capacity, and goal clarity which are intra-organizational characteristics in organizations.

- *Human Resource Function*

Another sub-theme which also emerged from the main theme „Personnel recruitment, training and retention“ is the role of Human Resource in personnel recruitment, training, and retention. When asked by the researcher “How does GCIS empower staff with the tools they need to deliver on its constitutional mandate?” 100% of the sampled population attributed this function to the Human Resource directorate. Their responses were as follows:

*Participant 1:*

*“The Bursary Committee set up by the Human Resource directorate screens all applications of staff who wish to be taken to training or enrolled at Institutions of Higher Learning for purposes of up-skilling. We also partner with Sector Education*

*and Training Authorities (SETAs) and National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA) to assist our personnel with training” PT1 (Participant 1).*

*Participant 2:*

*“Depending on the availability of the budget, GCIS complies with the agreements reached between officials and supervisors as outlined in the performance development plans. My only concern is that sometimes there is a mismatch between available courses (due to budget constraints) and the post. For example, in the performance development plan, it could have been identified that I need a refresher course in media training, but that specific course isn’t available, and I would have to opt for another one. So, the Human Resource directorate does assist us, but sometimes budget constraints limit our targets” PT2 (Participant 2).*

*Participant 3:*

*“Managers at all levels conduct assessments for their subordinates according to their work and skills, if they identify the need for improvement, then they recommend training for that subordinate. This is to ensure that the subordinate sharpens his or her skills. Also, the subordinate is given a chance to choose the courses or workshops that he or she needs to attend. All these are included in the PDP which is submitted to Human Resources directorate” PT3 (Participant 3).*

Other participants kept their verbal responses very concise when asked the same question: “How does GCIS empower staff with the tools they need to deliver on its constitutional mandate?”

*Participant 4:*

*“That is the prerogative of the Human Resource directorate” PT4 (Participant 4).*

*Participant 5:*

*“GCIS capacitates all employees regularly through the Human Resources directorate” PT5 (Participant 5).*

*Participant 6:*

*“Most of our personnel is empowered and capacitated with working tools and training through Human Resource directorate” PT6 (Participant 6).*

Mbemba, Gagnon and Hamelin-Braban (2016) state that successful recruitment in developing nations is buoyed by improved employment opportunities and/or career prospects, higher wages, good living conditions or a more stimulating environment. Regarding retention, working and living conditions, opportunities of career growth and financial incentives have a strong effect on retention in low-income nations. Based on the above statements by participants, it is evident that the Human Resource directorate carries the responsibility of personnel recruitment, training, and retention. The sampled population expect the Human Resource directorate to lead them in this regard. To this end, they unanimously hold the view that their training needs are being attended to albeit the scarcity of resources.

According to Damei (2020), the retention of personnel is very important for the overall performance of the institution. Most institutions are viewed based on how they retain their personnel hence the high retention rate ensures that competent personnel are retained through providing them with superior environment that will increase their performance at individual levels. This view is consistent with Nguyen and Duong (2020) who aver that, personnel are the most valuable asset because they have a direct impact on outcomes. If the performance of personnel is positive, they will lead to success; in contrast, if the performance of personnel is negative, they will lead to failure.

Hafez, AbouelNeel and Elsaid (2017) argue that personnel management strategies have to cater to what makes workers feel gratified with their occupation. For example, professional training and development, work tasks that require use of the workers’ skills and fuel their passion and feeling connected to a broader group of fellow workers. These are things that workers need in order to feel enthused and committed to their work environment. Professional factors influencing retention of GCIS Free State personnel are somewhat similar to those influencing their recruitment. Opportunities for professional progression, professional support, study opportunities, financial incentives and professional autonomy are among factors that have an influence on retention of personnel at GCIS Free State province.

### 4.3.2 Personnel Management Challenges

The second main theme (Personnel Management Challenges) emerged from the third research question „What are the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State?“. The sub-themes that have been identified and discussed are: Bi-Annual Assessments, Financial Resources and Staff Morale as stipulated in Table 4.3 below.

Theme	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Personnel Management Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="651 667 877 752">1. Performance Assessments</li> <li data-bbox="651 972 970 1008">2. Financial Resources</li> <li data-bbox="651 1272 858 1308">3. Staff Morale</li> </ol>	<p data-bbox="1015 667 1401 904">Participants highlighted the fact that they conduct annual end of cycle performance assessments regularly with their supervisors.</p> <p data-bbox="1015 972 1401 1205">It was also mentioned that constraints brought forth by the limited budget affect the implementation of certain tasks.</p> <p data-bbox="1015 1272 1401 1559">Participants further highlighted the termination of cash bonuses and slow increment of salaries as factors that have affected morale among staff.</p>

**Table 4.3** Personnel Management Challenges.

#### 4.3.2.1 Discussion of sub-themes

- *Performance Assessments*

Participants stated that each official conducts his or her performance assessment with his or her supervisor on a quarterly, bi-annual, and annual basis wherein Key Performance Areas (KPAs) that are included in the job description are assessed. In an event that the official objects to being assessed or does not agree to the total

score given to him by the supervisor, he or she may submit such an objection in writing. The following statements regarding this sub-theme were made:

*Participant 1:*

*“At the moment we do not have serious challenges regarding personnel management. Whenever the time for conducting performance assessments come, everyone complies and supervisors together with their subordinates discuss areas of concern. So, that system works very well for us” PT1 (Participant 1).*

*Participant 2:*

*“Areas where the official needs further development are identified as part of generic assessment factors in the performance plan. These then inform our Personal Development Plans” PT2 (Participant 2).*

In concurrence with these statements by participants, Ochidi, Suleiman, Olumoyegun, and Yusufu (2019) state that, performance assessments play an important role in measuring personnel performance and assist the institution to monitor the progress towards strategic objectives and outcomes. The system engages, motivates, and directs personnel toward achieving goals. Personnel who receive positive scores on their assessments are generally motivated to improve their performance hence this makes them feel worthy and valuable.

Personnel performance commonly refers to the amount of output generated from job execution by an employee over a particular duration of time in an organization. The early notion of employee performance largely backed by scientific management thought focused only on the quantity of output of performing a task. However, the dimensions of both quantity and quality were added to the personnel performance later in assessing performance of personnel. The performance of personnel in an organization is a key concern for supervisors irrespective of their level and ranking. This is particularly relevant when an organization is experiencing a downward trend or a standstill in their employees’ performance. Assessment of personnel performance is required for effective performance management in organizations (Dhammika, 2013).

- *Financial Resources*

Another sub-theme that surfaced from the main theme „Personnel Management Challenges“ is Financial Resources. Participants mentioned the impact that this has on their work as well as on the overall morale of personnel.

*Participant 3* averred:

*“We’re currently under-resourced, financially. As a result, some vacant posts can’t be advertised, and this obviously means that some officials have to carry out extra duties on their shoulders. The staff morale has also been affected by the cancelation of cash bonuses” PT3 (Participant 3).*

*Participant 6:*

*“At the moment I can only point out that resources are a bit of a challenge for us. It is difficult to carry some of the tasks without sufficient resources” PT6 (Participant 6).*

According to the GCIS Annual Report (2022), the GCIS was initially allocated R749 million for the 2021/22 financial year. During the 2021 Adjusted Estimates of National Expenditure (AENE), the appropriation was increased with R7.7 million to R757.4 million, with additional funds (R6.9 million) allocated for the improvement of conditions of service on levels 1-12 as well as a further R800 000 as self-financing expenditure. Of the adjusted allocated budget, the GCIS spent R755 million (99.7%) by 31 March 2022. An under-spending of around R2.426 million (0.3%) was realised. The under-spending comprises of R752 000 in Compensation of Employees (CoE) due to the attrition of staff and vacant posts.

Onuorah and Appa (2012) posit that fiscal accountability is very important within public sector institutions. It serves these institutions with mechanisms of how programmes can fail and coming up with strategies that can make programmes succeed. Coker (2010 cited in Onuorah and Appa 2012) suggests that there are many ways of accountability in the public sector. Chief among them is **1) Process Based Accountability:** This approach evaluates compliance with pre-set standards and clearly defined targets. **2) Performance Based Accountability:** This approach evaluates performance against broad targets or goals. This approach can be qualitative and the criteria against which performance is measured less vividly defined. Fiscal transparency can be defined as the unrestricted access to timely and reliable information on decisions and performance whereas accountability refers to

mechanisms to report on the usage of public resources and consequences for failing to meet stated performance objectives (United Nations 2004 cited Chigumira, Chipumho and Chiwunze 2020).

#### 4.3.3 The Effect of Personnel Management on Performance

The third main theme (The Effect of Personnel Management on Performance) emerged from the fourth research question „To what extent does personnel management affect the performance of GCIS?“. The sub-themes that have been identified and discussed are: Performance Bonuses, Performance Agreements and Labour Unions as illustrated in Table 4.4 below.

Theme	Sub-themes	Issues raised
The Effect of Personnel Management on Performance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="651 875 874 958">1. Performance Bonuses</li> <li data-bbox="651 1279 874 1361">2. Performance Agreements</li> <li data-bbox="651 1581 895 1615">3. Labour Unions</li> </ol>	<p data-bbox="1015 875 1401 1205">Participants mentioned that the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has cut off the payment of cash bonuses across the public sector since 2021.</p> <p data-bbox="1015 1279 1401 1509">Performance Agreements are entered into between each official and the supervisor on an annual basis.</p> <p data-bbox="1015 1581 1401 1861">It was also raised that trade unions are not presently active at GCIS Free State and play no role in improving the performance of their members in the workplace.</p>

**Table 4.4** *The Effect of Personnel Management on Performance.*

#### 4.3.3.1 Discussion of sub-themes

- *Performance Bonuses*

Some participants stated that the cancelation or non-payment of performance bonuses has had an effect on their performance. The approved Incentive Policy Framework (2017) provides that departments may not utilise more than 1.5% of their annual remuneration budget for the purpose of resourcing departmental financial performance incentive schemes. However, given the current financial situation, post the conclusion of the 2018 Wage Agreement and residual costs emanating from this agreement, various cost containment measures have been approved by Cabinet, which include the review of the current Incentive Policy Framework for all sectors.

*Participant 1:*

*“Performance bonuses have unfortunately been cut-off due to budget constraints across the public sector, but our management is looking into new ways we can use to incentivise our officials. For example, proposals such as giving officials day-offs or giving them vouchers for good performance are being looked into” PT1 (Participant 1).*

*Participant 2:*

*“Payment of performance bonuses was gradually decreased over the past few years until they were totally cancelled in 2021/22 financial year as directed by DPSA. During 2018/19 financial year, payment of performance bonuses was capped at 1.5%. In 2019/20, it was 0.75%. In 2020/21 it was 0.5% and in 2021/22 it was totally cancelled” PT2 (Participant 2).*

*Participant 6:*

*“In the past, each employee was expected to do performance assessment and motivate his or her achievements to qualify for a performance bonus. Unfortunately, we no longer get paid performance bonuses” PT6 (Participant 6).*

From the above sentiments expressed by participants, it is evident that most of them associate performance assessments with payment of performance bonus. Without this financial incentive in place, participants are not keen on undergoing performance

assessments hence they feel that their performance is not valued and rewarded. Andrejić (2022) states that, work performance is influenced by numerous factors such as financial, operational, social, technical, quality factors, environment, etc. Management's task is to ensure a fair way of distributing bonuses and additional income. Ochidi et al (2019) concur by avowing that, positive feedback on performance assessment gives personnel a feeling of worth and value, especially when accompanied by salary increases. If a supervisor gives an employee a poor score on his or her assessment, the employee may feel a loss of motivation in the workplace.

- *Performance Agreements*

The second sub-theme which emerged from the main theme „The Effect of Personnel Management on Performance“ is Performance Agreements. When asked by the researcher “To what extent does personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State?” participants responded as follows:

*Participant 5:*

*“Each year, we sign Performance Agreements with our supervisors to ensure that we are all clear about our performance targets for that specific period. The Performance Agreement is then reviewed and assessed quarterly. I think this is a good way in which personnel is managed to ensure that it performs” PT5 (Participant 5).*

*Participant 6:*

*“Performance Agreements are assessment tools which help us measure our performance. In the Performance Agreement, the mandate of the post is clearly outlined, the work plan together with the development plan are also stipulated and, lastly, the agreement is reached between the official and the supervisor. The signed agreement is then submitted to HR” PT6 (Participant 6).*

“The term „performance agreement“ refers to a policy concept or instrument that is referred to by various other terms in various systems and contexts, such as performance contracts, performance targets or performance agreements” (Sulistiani and Faozanudin 2020: 142). In this regard, participants’ assertions are also supported by Brown, O’Kane, Mazumdar and McCracken (2019) who state that,

personnel need to have adequate and unambiguous information regarding job expectations such as outlining goals and performance expectations. The effectiveness of the performance agreement is the attainment of the goals or targets of the performance agreement.

- *Labour Unions*

Another sub-theme which was raised by participants on the effect of personnel management on performance is the non-existence of labour unions/representatives within GCIS Free State.

*Participant 3:*

*“Since I’ve assumed office in GCIS Free State, I have never come across any union representative nor have I ever been invited to any union meeting. We currently do not have shop stewards to directly take our matters to management” PT3 (Participant 3).*

*Participant 4:*

*“There are no union representatives here at our provincial office, but I know that at our headquarters they are active. They even sit in interviews and are present at other forums where personnel management issues are discussed. I think if we have them present here in the province, then they would be able to engage management from time to time about our issues” PT4 (Participant 4).*

Trade unions aim for the protection and representation of socio-economic interests of workers. In modern times, under conditions of a market economy, trade unions have the capacity to champion workers’ rights while establishing a constructive cooperation with the employer and facilitating enterprises development (Mahas-Demydas and Rudnytska 2019). It is concerning that most participants alluded that they hardly encountered the presence of any trade union since they have been in the employment of GCIS Free State. Notwithstanding the fact that, there are no major labour challenges at the moment within the GCIS Free State, it would be to the benefit of all personnel if a trade union representative or shop steward was to be appointed to offer services typically rendered by a trade union.

Among others, trade unions offer various services to affiliated workers. These services include communicating interests of workers to the employer: negotiating bargaining agreements with the employer, representing members in disciplinary hearings, and lastly, championing workers' interests with regard to labour, social and economic policy (International Labour Organisation, 2015). The onus is on workers to affiliate to a trade union of their choice and receive benefits of organised labour. Their current non-affiliation can be attributed to the absence of union activity at GCIS hence Davies, Bryson and Jones (2021; 10) aver that, "the ability of joining a trade union will be dependent on the availability of a union at the workplace".

#### 4.3.4 Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenges

The fourth main theme (Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenges) emerged from the fifth research question „What are the possible solutions that can curb personnel management challenges for GCIS?“. The sub-themes that have been identified and discussed are: Leave Management, Collegiality and Employee Wellness as illustrated in Table 4.5 below.

Theme	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenges.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="651 1205 967 1238">1. Leave Management</li> <li data-bbox="651 1458 847 1491">2. Collegiality</li> <li data-bbox="651 1711 963 1744">3. Employee Wellness</li> </ol>	<p data-bbox="1015 1205 1398 1384">It was mentioned by participants that absenteeism in the workplace is minimised.</p> <p data-bbox="1015 1458 1398 1637">It was also suggested that cordial working relations among personnel should be fostered.</p> <p data-bbox="1015 1711 1398 1890">Participants proposed that the issue of Employee Wellness must receive attention from management.</p>

**Table 4.5** Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenges.

#### 4.3.4.1 Discussion of sub-themes

- *Leave Management*

The first sub-theme to emerge from the main theme „Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenge“ is Leave Management. Participants suggested that absenteeism in the workplace must continue to be properly managed through individual Leave Plans.

*Participant 1 stated that:*

*“We currently do not have major challenges regarding absenteeism or leave abuse in our office. I think this is because we try to adhere to our leave plans as much as possible. Even during the COVID-19 lockdown we successfully implemented rotational schedules where officials reported for duty using shifts. These are some of the tools that help us to address personnel management challenges” PT1 (Participant 1).*

*Participant 2:*

*“There are two registers in our office, one for officials and the one for visitors. Everyone has to sign in and out when they enter the building. This is a good way of monitoring movements and record keeping” PT2 (Participant 2).*

*Participant 3:*

*“We have a leave register which is used to document all our leave forms for record keeping. There’s hardly any challenge with leave abuse at the moment” PT3 (Participant 3).*

According to the Department of Public Service and Administration, there are different categories and types of leave that all public officials are entitled to. The first category is „Leave Taken as Working Days“ which entails; annual leave, normal sick leave, and temporary incapacity leave. The second category is „Leave for Occupational Injuries and Diseases“ which includes adoptive leave; family responsibility leave, pre-natal leave, and paternity leave. The third category is „Special Leave“ which includes leave for union office bearers; leave for union shop stewards and unpaid leave (DPSA, 2012). The fact that most participants indicated that they currently do not

have any challenges of leave abuse or unjustified absenteeism point out that, administratively, leave is managed well within the organisation. Adamu (2020) states that personnel leave management system includes a number of processes and systems to automate and easily manage personnel data, leave request, track and grant leave. In most institutions, personnel are entitled to various types of leave; these leaves are approved in line with institutional policy. The human resource department is often responsible for managing and approving leave requests.

- *Collegiality*

According to participants, the cooperation that currently exists among colleagues is part of the variables that contribute towards effective personnel management. This sub-theme emerged from the main fourth theme „Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenges“.

*Participant 2:*

*“For cordial working relations to be established there has to be openness and transparency about operational matters. Biasness and favouritism have to be eliminated as well” PT2 (Participant 2).*

Hewett and Paro (2020) define collegiality as social interactions and belongingness among personnel. This definition is concurred by Mikkola and Nykänen (2019; 1) who posit that, “Workplace relationships form the basis for collaboration, but they are also important for personal and social goals, such as job satisfaction and well-being. In the workplace, there are many different types of co-worker relationships, such as leader–follower relationships, peer or collegial relationships, friendships, and even romantic relationships. Employees may have many relationships based mainly on information exchange, but they may also have some special relationships characterized by personal commitment and companionship. Co-worker relationships exhibit mutual dependency and independence at the same time, and professional identities are managed in workplace relationships as well”.

- *Employee Wellness*

The last sub-theme which emerged from the fourth main theme „Solutions to curb Personnel Management Challenges“ is Employee Wellness. Participants mentioned the important role that this function plays in boosting the morale of personnel.

*Participant 1:*

*“Employee Wellness is important in ensuring that officials are engaged in activities that encourage positive behaviour. For example, when an official has serious personal challenges, he or she is encouraged to go for counselling or to seek any other professional help. Bereavements are also handled in a humane manner and support is extended to an affected official. With regard to new mothers and fathers, there is maternity and paternity leave available for them” PT1 (Participant 1).*

*Participant 6:*

*“I remember that when I was still working at national office, there were rooms dedicated for breastfeeding and changing nappies. There was also provision for mothers of new-borns to travel with their nannies at the cost of the employer. I have not seen that recently, but it played a role in taking care of employee needs” PT6 (Participant 6).*

The above verbatim statements by participants confirm that poor employee health can result to low productivity with economic implications. It can also erode organisational excellence and the bottom line. According to Qaisar, Mariam and Ahmad (2018), personnel and its productive output are important factors that determine the success of the institution. Personnel productivity is defined as the ability of the worker to have characteristics that assist him or her in efficient and effective functioning in the workplace. Unhealthy and non-productive human resource may stifle out organizational excellence, competitive advantage, and the bottom line. In certain cases, an employee’s own employability and associated wellbeing of his family might be at risk.

Initiating and sustaining wellness activities in the workplace, depends on managerial support to personnel such that they feel enthused and encouraged for optimum participation in those activities. Bearing in mind the expected benefits, probably

every organization (including GCIS Free State) would prefer to have its own wellness programme.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter presented and discussed the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The sampled population comprised of GCIS Free State employees and sought to find out their understanding of personnel management. A total of four themes and various sub-themes were identified from in-depth interviews conducted. The findings indicate that personnel training at GCIS take place regularly through the Human Resource directorate. The findings further demonstrate that performance assessments are conducted regularly and that areas where personnel need training are included in the personal development plans. From responses that were provided by participants, it is also evident that most of them are of the view that they work in an environment which is under-resourced.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the cancelation of performance bonuses has negatively affected the morale of personnel towards job performance. Despite this, findings also indicate that personnel continue to adhere to performance agreements that are signed annually. The findings show that there is no trade union currently organising personnel at GCIS Free State to facilitate relations between personnel and management. Furthermore, the findings illustrate that there is no leave abuse hence leave is managed properly according to legislation. Lastly, findings indicate that cordial work relations and employee wellness are solutions that personnel propose to be implemented with regard to eliminating personnel management challenges at GCIS Free State. The next chapter will present summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the results of the data analysis as well as the discussion thereof. This is the final chapter of the study. It commences by focusing on the summary of research findings and draws conclusions from the findings. It further presents recommendations and suggestions for future research.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This discussion reflects on the extent to which research objectives were realized and research questions have been answered. The main objective of this study was to provide an analysis of personnel management and the performance of Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in Free State. The study had four (4) major objectives which were:

1. To investigate how personnel is managed in GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing, and reporting government events, policies, and programmes.
2. To determine qualitatively the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State.
3. To explore the extent at which personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State.
4. To suggest and recommend possible solutions to address personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State.

**5.2.1 Objective 1:** To investigate how personnel is managed in GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing, and reporting government events, policies, and programmes.

The research findings indicate that the calibre of GCIS Free State personnel that is needed to carry out its mandate is one that has academic qualifications. By qualified personnel, we mean personnel which meets the minimum standards of the posts and

is competent enough to master the duties that are associated with the posts. It is evident that the Human Resource directorate carries the responsibility of personnel recruitment, training, and retention. The sampled population expressed their expectation of the Human Resource directorate to lead them in this regard. To this end, they unanimously hold the view that their training needs are being attended to albeit the scarcity of resources.

**5.2.2 Objective 2:** To determine qualitatively the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State.

Participants stated that each official conducts his or her performance assessment with his or her supervisor on a quarterly, bi-annual, and annual basis wherein Key Performance Areas (KPA's) that are included in the job description are assessed. In an event that the official objects to being assessed or does not agree to the total score given to him by the supervisor, he or she may submit such an objection in writing. The findings also revealed that constraints brought forth by the limited budget affect the implementation of certain tasks. Lastly, the termination of cash bonuses and slow increment of salaries are some factors that have affected morale among staff.

**5.2.3 Objective 3:** To explore the extent at which personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State.

The findings revealed that most of participants associate performance assessments with payment of performance bonus. Without this financial incentive in place, participants are not keen on undergoing performance assessments hence they feel that their performance is not valued and rewarded. They also conceded that they have adequate and unambiguous information regarding their job expectations. Most participants alluded that they hardly encountered the presence of any trade union since they have been in the employment of GCIS Free State. Notwithstanding the fact that, there are no major labour challenges at the moment within the GCIS Free State, it would be to the benefit of all personnel if a trade union representative or shop steward was to be appointed in order to offer services typically rendered by a trade union.

**5.2.4 Objective 4:** To suggest and recommend possible solutions to address personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State.

The findings revealed that absenteeism in the GCIS Free State workplace is minimised through proper management of individual leave plans. Participants also suggested that cordial working relations among personnel should be fostered. Participants further proposed that the issue of Employee Wellness must receive attention from management as part of the solutions to address personnel management challenges.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON FINDINGS**

It can be concluded from the research findings that personnel at GCIS Free State is academically qualified and adequately trained to carry out its legislative mandate of planning, implementing, and reporting government events, policies and programmes (Objective 1). Furthermore, it can also be concluded that performance assessments which are conducted on a quarterly, bi-annual, and annual basis are important tools that GCIS Free State utilises to mitigate personnel management challenges. The non-payment of performance bonuses has negatively affected staff morale among the majority of participants (Objective 2). Moreover, participants are not keen on undergoing performance assessments without any guaranteed incentive. They associate performance assessment with performance bonuses. Participants are, however, very clear about their job expectations and duties. Currently there is no presence or active participation of trade unions at GCIS Free State (Objective 3). Lastly, it can be concluded from the research findings that there is a proper leave management practice in place and that cordial working relations are being fostered (Objective 4).

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the literature study (chapter 2 and 3) and the empirical study (chapter 4) undertaken, the following recommendations concerning personnel management and performance are suggested:

#### **5.4.1 Recommendations based on findings from Objective 1**

- The organisation must continue rolling out training opportunities for its personnel and earmark sufficient financial resources.
- The Human Resources directorate should ensure that training courses that are offered by the organisation match training needs identified during the performance assessments.
- Strategic partnerships must be forged with other institutions such as Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), National School of Government (NSG) and the National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA) for training opportunities.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations based on findings from Objective 2**

- Personal Development Plans (PDP) which emanate from Performance Assessments of personnel must be fully implemented and not just be conducted for the sake of compliance.
- All vacant posts on the organisational structure must be filled.
- The organisation should provide personnel with adequate tools of trade which meet requirements for the technological and digital demands of the sector.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendations based on findings from Objective 3**

- The organisation must find creative ways of rewarding personnel who've achieved their job targets as set out in their performance assessments. Due to the cancellation or non-payment of performance bonuses, personnel no longer value the importance of this activity. The organisation can issue prizes, certificates of recognition, host staff events or use internal media (newsletter) to fill this gap.
- Labour unions must be encouraged to exist within the organisation in order to help manage the relationship between personnel and management. They can help management to be kept abreast of grievances and concerns of personnel on a regular basis.

#### **5.4.4 Recommendations based on findings from Objective 4**

- Employee Wellness programmes must receive attention in order to help personnel manage psychological stressors within the workplace (i.e. work-overload, financial issues, deadlines, health issues etc.).

#### **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study was limited to GCIS Free State. The research sample that comprised of 6 officials was limited for generalising the findings of this study. The research findings should not be generalised to other offices contexts since challenges differ from office to office. Data gathered was limited to the information provided by the sampled participants and observations from the sampled office.

#### **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study analyses personnel management and the performance of Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Free State, South Africa. The sample used was relatively small and consisted only of employees within Free State Province. The study could be extended in future to include samples of other provincial offices for triangulation purposes.

Future research could explore personnel management and performance at the GCIS headquarters to compare compliance with organisational laid down standards. It is further recommended that, because performance management is a critical practice within any organisation, further studies could compare the challenges experienced in the public sector to those in the private sector, for benchmarking and learning from each other's best practices. Lastly, further research could also include several methodologies, to avoid relying on one approach to research.

#### **5.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the findings of the study, in line with the objectives which were stated earlier. From these findings, a summary of the conclusions was outlined, which then guided the recommendations for practice. All studies have limitations,

and these were also highlighted in this chapter. Lastly, suggestions for future studies were proffered.

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## APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

### University of Zululand

Department of Public Administration

Private Bag X1001

KwaDlangezwa

3886

13 June 2022

### The Provincial Director

Government Communication and Information System Free State

Bloem Plaza, East Burger Street

Mangaung

9300

Dear Sir/Maám

### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Zululand. My supervisors are Professor N.N Jili and Dr N Ndebele (Co-supervisor).

The proposed topic of my research is: ***“An analysis of personnel management and the performance of Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Free State, South Africa: Management and Communicators’ Perspectives”***. The findings of this study will assist in areas of human resource management and development. They will further serve as a baseline for future assessments and enhance organizational performance of your institution.

I hereby request permission to administer in-depth interviews with senior managers at GCIS Headquarters. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors. Our contact details are as follows:

**Prof. N.N Jili:** [JiliN@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:JiliN@unizulu.ac.za) / 035 902 6615

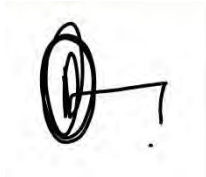
**Dr N. Ndebele:** [NdebeleN@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:NdebeleN@unizulu.ac.za) / 035 902 6615

**Mr F.J Sonkwane:** [fezile.sonkwane@gmail.com](mailto:fezile.sonkwane@gmail.com) / 064 503 1626

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the dissertation. I hope my request will meet your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely

**Fezile James Sonkwane**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized circular shape with a horizontal line extending to the right, ending in a small vertical tick.

## APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

### UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**Researcher:** Fezile James Sonkwane

**Supervisor:** Prof. Nokukhanya Jili

**Co-Supervisor:** Dr. Nduduzo Ndebele

**Research Dean/Officer:** Prof I Kaseeram

Dear Sir/Madam

You are kindly requested to conduct an for academic purposes, as I am doing my Masters in Public Administration. I am undertaking a study titled. “**An analysis of personnel management and the performance of Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Free State, South Africa: Management and Communicators’ Perspectives**”. You will not be required to give your name or your contact details, therefore your response will remain anonymous.

This study does not intend to cause any harm now or in the future, your privacy and confidentiality will remain. You may refuse or withdraw to participate from the project at any time you want. Your Participation in this study will be of great importance, should you have any queries you should feel free to contact myself (researcher) or my supervisor using the following contact details.



(Researcher)

**Email:** [fezile.sonkwane@gmail.com](mailto:fezile.sonkwane@gmail.com)

**Cell Phone:** 064 503 1626

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**Researcher:** Fezile James Sonkwane

**Supervisor:** Prof. Nokukhanya Jili

**Co-Supervisor:** Dr. Nduduzo Ndebele

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

	<b>GCIS Free State Management</b>	<b>Proposed Date</b>
1	<b>Provincial Director</b>	August 2022
2	<b>Deputy Director</b>	August 2022
3	<b>Assistant Director</b>	August 2022
4	<b>Regional Coordinator: Mangaung Metro (Vacant)</b>	N/A
5	<b>Regional Coordinator: Xhariep District</b>	August 2022
6	<b>Regional Coordinator: Lejweleputswa District</b>	August 2022
7	<b>Regional Coordinator:</b>	August 2022

	<b>Fezile Dabi District</b>	
8	<b>Regional Coordinator: Thabo Mofutsanyana District</b>	August 2022



**Email:** [fezile.sonkwane@gmail.com](mailto:fezile.sonkwane@gmail.com)

**Cell Phone:** 064 503 1626

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

	<b>Research Objectives</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
<b>1</b>	Investigate how personnel is managed in GCIS Free State particularly on its legislative mandate of planning, implementing and reporting government events, policies and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does GCIS ensure that it attracts skilled employees at all levels?</li> <li>• How does GCIS empower staff with the tools they need to deliver on its constitutional mandate?</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	Determine qualitatively the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges of personnel management of GCIS Free State?</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	Explore the extent at which personnel management affect the performance of GCIS Free State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does personnel management affect the performance of GCIS?</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	Suggest and recommend possible solutions to address personnel management challenges for GCIS Free State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the possible solutions that can curb personnel management challenges for GCIS?</li> </ul>

**BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS:**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Mark X</b>
Gender	Male	
	Female	
Age	21-30	
	31-40	
	41-50	
	51-60	
Race	African	
	Coloured	
	White	
Designation	Director	
	Deputy Director	
	Assistant Director	
	Regional Coordinator	
Education	Primary	
	Secondary	
	Tertiary	
Years of Service	0-5	
	6-10	
	11-15	
	16-20	



**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH  
ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



**ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2022/09		
Project Title	An analysis of personnel management and the performance of Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) headquarters in Tshwane, South Africa: Senior Management Perspectives		
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	F.J. Sonkwane		
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Prof NN Jili	Dr NC Ndebele	
Department	Public Administration		
Faculty	Commerce, Administration and Law		
Type of Risk	Medium Risk – Data collection from people		
Nature of Project	Honours/4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Master's	Doctoral
		x	Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
- (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date- 12 July 2023]
- (3) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.
- (4) Under the Protection of Personal Information Act, 04 of 2013 ("POPIA"), researchers have a general legal duty to protect the information they process. They must ensure the security and protection of any personal information processed through the research and provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. The information collected via interviews must be for research purposes only. No personal information such as opinions, views, and academic background may be linked to the respondents' identity or shared with anyone for marketing purposes or otherwise.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.

Prof. Nokuthula Kunene  
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation  
12 July 2022

**CHAIRPERSON**  
**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH**  
**ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC)**  
**REG NO: UZREC 171110-30**




2022 -07- 12.

**RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE**

**RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE**  
Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>  
Private Bag X1001  
KwaDlangezwa, 3886  
Tel: 035 902 6374/6324  
Email: [MthembuNI@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:MthembuNI@unizulu.ac.za)/[ManqeleS@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:ManqeleS@unizulu.ac.za)

6. The GCIS shall, with immediate effect, revoke the agreement for violation of any of the terms and conditions.
7. By signing below the researcher and his/her supervisor acknowledges that the terms and conditions of this agreement are binding.

**B. SIGNATURES**

Name and surname of the researcher: <i>Fazile James Sontwane</i>	Date: <i>13 July 2022</i>
Signature of the researcher: 	
Name and surname of the supervisor: Nokuthanya Ntuli	Date: <i>13/07/22</i>
Signature of the supervisor: 	
Name and surname of GCIS representative: <i>MOLISA SLOVA</i>	Date: <i>17/07/2022</i>
Signature of GCIS representative: 	

Research Work Confidentiality Agreement

2/2



**government**  
**communications**

Department:  
Government Communication & Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**RESEARCH CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Name and surname of researcher	<i>Fazile James Sontwane</i>
Name and address of Institution	<i>Umzulu Private Bag X 1001 KwaDlangezwa</i>
Student number	<i>202178710</i>
Course	<i>Master of Public Administration</i>
Residential address	<i>15307 KwaKhangwane Street Wakberg, 9463</i>
Work telephone number	<i>066 479 0357</i>
Mobile number	<i>064 503 1626</i>
Email	<i>fazile.sontwane@gmail.com</i>

**A. TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

1. The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) has granted you permission to conduct academic research in the department.
2. You are required to protect all the confidential information and documents shared with you for research purposes.
3. Strictly use the information and data provided in line with the requirements of your tertiary institution.
4. You are required to share the findings of your research work (thesis or dissertation) to the GCIS.
5. This agreement shall be terminated after 12 months from the date of signature. However, both parties may extend it in writing.

Research Work Confidentiality Agreement

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*Amanda Timbe*

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## *Declaration*

21 September 2023

To whom it may concern

This serves to inform you that I have linguistically revised, in English, the degree of Master of Public Administration entitled:

**AN ANALYSIS OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (GCIS) FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA: MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATORS' PERSPECTIVES**, and that all necessary changes to the document were made.

You are more than welcome to contact me should you require any further information.

Kind regards

**Ms Amanda Timbe**

Coordinator & Lecturer: Academic Literacy and Communication Studies & Communication Modules

Freelancer & Communication Specialist: Language Practice and Media Studies

(B.Tech: Language Practice and Media Studie, PGCE)

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